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THE SOVIET WORLD SYSTEM: ORIGINS, EVOLUTION, PROSPECTS FOR REFORM

By Victor Zaslavsky

All the social sciences are now in flux and Soviet studies even more so. Many traditional approaches prove to be useless for understanding the changed world and there is a search for new explanatory models, and even for "alternative organizing myths."[1] All this fosters confusion and during such periods of "paradigm change" debates assume predictable characteristics.

First of all, there appears a large gap between, in John Stuart Mill's words, "the meaning which a term bears in common acceptation" and that which the writer "intends to annex to it." It provides a great opportunity for sniping and passionately accusing opponents of lack of conceptual rigor. But because many old concepts are unsatisfactory and the theory that informs them does not yet exist, such passions are often unjustified. Also, in such periods, a necessary boundary between basic research and policy applications becomes invariably blurred. Scarcity of reliable data, theories and concepts forces scholars, often unconsciously, to fall back upon ideologies and systems of values to substitute for lack of theory. Finally, there appears a strong temptation to personalize exchange and engage in *ad hominem* arguments.

Not surprisingly, all these characteristics are present in recent *Telos* debates.[2] Given the situation in Soviet studies, a value-loaded analysis is an inevitable and to some extent even legitimate method of presentation of one's ideas.[3]

1. Immanuel Wallerstein, "An Agenda for World-Systems Analysis," in William R. Thompson ed. *Contending Approaches to World System Analysis,* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1983), p. 302.

2. See Castoriadis-Piccone-Zaslavsky exchange in *Telos,* 53, (Fall 1982); Tim Luke, "On the Nature of Soviet Society," and Andrew Arato, "Between Reductionism and Relativism: Soviet Society as a World System," *Telos,* 63, (Spring 1985).

3. Not so with *ad hominem* arguments. I am particularly surprised by Luke's assertion that by disagreeing with him I am polemicizing "against American Sovietology *in toto*" (Luke, *op. cit.,* p. 195). This argument kills two birds with one stone: I, with my "man on the street" approach, am excluded from American Sovietology and Luke, with his expert knowledge, enters the field instead. But claims of belonging to a scientific field can be justified neither on the basis of origin or training nor on the basis of self-appointment, but solely by way of positive results achieved. It is difficult to become an expert and here I can sympathize with Luke's predicament. But there are some standard procedures which normally yield satisfactory results. "How do we seize the foreign past? We read, we learn, we ask, we remember, we are humble." Julian Barnes, *Flaubert's Parrot.* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1984), p. 90. When Luke writes that Zaslavsky, relying on his emigré status, "can get away with . . . disputing the authority of Pipes, Goldman, Castoriadis, and me," he is anything but humble. It would never have occurred to me to refer in the same breath to Pipes' formidable knowledge of Russian history and to Luke's very approximate knowledge of

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But here we have another variant of the observer's paradox: in the world divided into two world systems there is no value-free position while certain important insights into the workings of these systems can only be obtained from a value-free standpoint.

Under these conditions conscious attempts at avoiding value judgments, at assuming a non-normative approach, in other terms, at looking at the competing world systems through the eyes of a "visitor from another galaxy" become indispensable. In principle, I do not avoid "normative or normatively based judgments of the Soviet empire," as Arato put it,[4] but if today we have no clear idea of what is meant by the Soviet *empire* or to what extent the very term is justified, passing normative judgments on such questionable constructs does not seem a useful occupation. Here, several points need to be made concerning the Soviet world system.

1. Soviet-type societies prove to be highly stable socio-political arrangements. The historical development of the Soviet Union from a semi-developed country to a global power and the center of a world system confirms this.

Moreover, not only the Soviet Union but other Soviet-type regimes, given a certain period of internal stabilization, usually manage to develop institutions, mechanisms and policies to neutralize and suppress any internal challenge to their rule. As Korbonski points out, "the East European regimes today may be stronger than they appear: they developed an impressive capacity for survival and immunity to internal and external shocks."[5] Periodic explosions in some East European countries do not undermine the overall stability of the Soviet bloc which remains largely immune to local crises.

The fact that for four decades several European countries have developed after a Soviet model and that this model is spreading among Third World countries supports the thesis that it is a dynamic and viable socio-economic system with a wide, albeit not universal, applicability.

As Arato points out, stability and viability in themselves are not values. And why should they be? But recognizing that today's Soviet society is a stable and viable form of social organization is methodologically important. First, it helps to check wishful thinking in times when new self-appointed Sovietologists come up with a fresh idea that the Soviet Union is on the brink of a general internal crisis so acute that it might use its army "to seize the oil

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Russia's past and Soviet present. It seems to me that there is a huge gap between the thorough analysis of the Soviet situation to which Luke aspires and his preparation for such a task. What makes Luke's analysis uninformed is his refusal, or inability, to use Soviet sources. Without such an access to the original literature Luke has no better criteria for discriminating among numerous English language publications than his own preconceptions. In fact, he relies without much discrimination on some of the best and worst books in the field.

4. Arato, *op. cit.*, p. 186.

5. Andrzej Korbonski, "Eastern Europe," in Robert F. Byrnes ed. *After Brezhnev, Sources of Soviet Conduct in the 1980s.* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), p. 317. See also Jadwiga Staniszkis, *Poland's Self-Limiting Revolution.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), pp. 270-277.

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fields"[6] or undertake even more desperate international actions.[7] Second, the stability premise gives us an analytical framework very different from one given by the still popular kind of reasoning which may be labelled "crisis thinking." This premise leads to several relevant questions. As Ulam has put it, "despite all those crises — mass terror, famines, catastrophic defeats in the first phase of the Second World War, a single one of which would have brought down any other regime — the Soviet system has not only survived, but grown in strength throughout its history. What is the secret of its durability, so disconcerting to a liberal-democratic moralist?"[8]

2. Every social system presupposes a set of "structural principles" or the "structural elements that are most deeply embedded in the space-time dimensions of social systems" and that "govern the basic institutional alignments of a society."[9] These principles are both system-forming and system-formed. All existing industrial societies belong now either to Western-type or to Soviet-type industrial societies. The structural principles of Soviet-type societies (elimination of private property in the means of production, centralized planning, one-party political system) and those of Western-type societies (private property, market relations, political pluralism) represent *alternative* sets of principles because industrial societies organized according to each of them are stable and viable. (No value judgment intended: standards of living and quality of life of the population in Soviet-type societies are usualy markedly lower than those in Western industrial societies.) These two sets of principles are mutually *exclusive* and *incompatible* in the sense that they obviously cannot coexist within one society (nation-state) and because they generate contrasting social systems. However, single structural elements (principles), taken separately, can be represented in an alternative structural setting, except that the dominant principle tends to restrict, suppress and eliminate the alternative one. This fact is sufficiently demonstrated by the vicissitudes of many nationalized industries in the West or those of various privately motivated economic activities or labor markets in Soviet-type societies.

Nothing prevents us from imagining an industrial society which will be organized according to a different set of structural principles.[10] There is a huge theoretical literature written by convinced supporters of either planned economy or market economy who attempt to demonstrate, from different standpoints, that the market mechanism is inextricably linked with private ownership while public ownership requires centralized planning. Next to it, there is considerable theoretical literature which tries to prove that under cer-

6. Caspar Weinberger quoted in R. Halloran, "Weinberger Says Outlay Is Needed," *New York Times,* February 8, 1982.

7. Michael Ledeen, *Grave New World.* (New York: Oxford, 1985).

8. Adam Ulam, "Surviving in Strength," *Times Literary Supplement,* September 13, 1985, p. 1010.

9. Anthony Giddens, *A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism.* (London: Macmillan, 1981), p 106.

10. See for example, Alec Nove, *The Economics of Feasible Socialism.* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1983).

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tain circumstances the market mechanism can be combined with public ownership and centralized planning.[11] The fact remains that industrial society actually exists in two different variants and that the structural incompatibility between the full-fledged Soviet-type and Western-type societies has been amply demonstrated.[12]

3. After decades of historical experience it is beyond doubt that Soviet-type industrial societies systematically and inevitably lose out to Western industrial societies in the competition for higher productivity of labor, rate of innovation, and greater satisfaction of demand. All Soviet-type economies share certain general features and economic problems which explain their inferior performance *vis-à-vis* Western economies. For example, persistent shortages in Soviet-type economies, as Kornai and Birman have shown, should not be regarded as a temporary consequence of over-investment or over-expansionary policies of a particular period; rather they have systemic origins due to the lack of "hard budget constraints."[13] All developed Soviet-type societies manifest the simultaneous existence of both labor shortage and underutilization of labor.[14] Soviet-type economies create massive alienation of the labor force.[15] On the basis of our better understanding of the operation of the Soviet-type political economy it can be concluded that, other things being equal, the general standard of living in Soviet-type societies is and will inevitably remain considerably lower than in Western societies.

4. An old idea of Lenin that productivity of labor is, in the final analysis, the decisive factor in the competition between two social systems, sound as it might have been in his time, is no longer valid. The first reason is that the situation has qualitatively changed since the advent of the Mutual Assured Destruction period. It is not important militarily whether a significant technological gap between the Soviet Union and the United States still exists or not, because "both sides can easily destroy the cities and larger towns of the other. And neither can launch an all-out strike that would fully disarm the other's weapons."[16] In other words, this gap simply translates into the degree

11. One of the leaders of this school of thought, Wlodzimierz Brus, having analyzed the East European reform experience, does not exclude today "the possible incompatibility in principle of public enterprise and planning with market." See Brus, P. Kende, Z. Mlynar, *The Soviet Systems After Brezhnev.* (Cologne: Crises in Soviet-type Systems Project, N5, 1984), p. 12.

12. From the beginnings of the Soviet state the recognition of this incompatibility has been one of the major tenets of Soviet ideology and policy. American politicians began understanding it much later. Charles Bohlen referred to Yalta as "the conference at which the illusions of the United States were subsequently destroyed . . . the illusion was destroyed that Russia would behave like a country and not like a cause" Quoted in C.L. Sulzberger, *Such a Peace. The Roots and Ashes of Yalta.* (N.Y.: Continuum, 1982), p. 137. Now it is common sense. Said Schultz, "experience suggests that the Soviets will periodically do something, somewhere, that is abhorrent or inimical to our interests" George P. Schultz, "New Realities and New Ways of Thinking," *Foreign Affairs,* (Spring 1985), p. 707.

13. Janos Kornai, *Economics of Shortage.* 2 vol. (Amsterdam: North-Holland Publ., 1980); Igor Birman, *Ekonomika nedostach.* (Benson, Ver.: Chalidze Publ., 1983).

14. Jan Adam ed. *Employment Policies in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.* (N.Y.: St. Martin's Press, 1982).

15. (T.I. Zaslavskaya), "The Novosibirsk Report," *Survey,* (Spring 1984).

16. Edward Luttwak, "Delusion of Soviet Weakness," *Commentary,* (January 1985), p. 77.

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of overkill. The second reason why lower productivity and rate of innovations do not necessarily lead to scientific backwardness and a growing technological gap is that Soviet-type society has at its disposal a compensating mechanism aptly called by Feher, Heller and Markus the "dictatorship over needs."[17] The Soviet Union has traditionally subordinated consumers' interest to industrial and military development. It means that central planners can ignore people's needs and wants, suppress its standard of living and produce little in the way of goods and "luxuries" which are deemed superfluous for industrial and military development. In this, and only in this sense, Soviet-type society is better protected against the over-production of goods and needs than its market-oriented counterpart. Moreover, central planners can always concentrate immense human and material resources on solving particularly important problems. They share with Western analysts the conviction that "military developments have come to depend more and more intimately on the combined technological skills of the nation's entire industry."[18] With this in mind, central planners determine the structure of the economy and capital investments in its various sectors. They maintain the largest scientific community in the world (no less than 25% of all scientists work in the Soviet Union) which is the most privileged part of the middle class. Finally, central planners and scientists together develop strategies aimed at compensating their expected technological and organizational backwardness. Technological gaps repeatedly emerge and are repeatedly narrowed. The experience of WWII or that of the postwar development of the Soviet nuclear weapons are especially instructive.[19]

17. F. Feher, A. Heller, G. Markus, *The Dictatorship Over Needs.* (N.Y.: St. Martin's Press, 1983).

18. Thane Gustaffson, *Selling the Russians the Rope? Soviet Technology Policy and U.S. Export Controls.* (Santa Monica: RAND, 1981), p. 66.

19. The Second World War gives us invaluable insights into the functioning of Soviet society. Those who prefer to think that the Soviet Union emerged victorious because of the Russian frost or the Russian patriotism or Western Lend-Lease deliveries or a combination of these factors simply refuse to face the reality. The major reason why the Soviet Union withstood and won the war against Nazi Germany, obviously one of the most advanced industrial societies of the period, is because the Soviets outproduced it industrially and, in several cases of fundamental armaments, left Germany behind technologically. Richard Ned Lebov, "The Soviet Offensive in Europe. The Schlieffen Plan Revisited?" *International Security,* (Spring 1985); V. Panov, "Sovetskaia promyshlennost v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny," *Voprosy ekonomiki,* 5, 1985. I understand that here I am providing another opportunity to call me a Russian chauvinist writing out of "national defensiveness" and I invite my opponents to resist the temptation. One can hate the hideous Stalinist system while being capable of a dispassionate analysis of its mobilizational potential. As to the problem of Soviet-type societies' technological backwardness, the idea of an inevitable overall technological gap between them and Western societies should be reconciled with our understanding that the key determinants of Soviet economic activity are internal rather than external and that for central planners the direction of development is, to a significant extent, a choice variable, not a "given". As Harry Rositzke, a CIA veteran with thirty-five years of "fighting the Russians" experience justifiably reminds us: "Soviet technology is often underrated. The Russians already have something to offer the West outside of their military and space technology. In the field of heavy industry, where they have placed much of their effort, they have sold licenses to American firms in welding, iron and steel production, and aluminum casting. They are at an advanced stage in electrical engineering, both in electric power stations and rail systems. They are ahead of the West in hydraulic mining and in some areas of drug research. The Russians still have

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5. If lower labor productivity, rate of innovation, living standards are systemic characteristics of Soviet-type societies compared to their Western counterparts, the former can survive only by closing themselves to the operation of the world market. If international market forces are permitted to penetrate a Soviet-type society they will inevitably reinforce certain domestic market-oriented mechanisms and groups, prompt consumers to demand improvements in living standards, and eventually destroy the one-party system. Closed borders, total state monopoly on foreign trade, inconvertibility of the internal currency are typical features of any Soviet-type society. Economic self-sufficiency, complete mobilization of internal resources and closure to the world market are the first preoccupations of the ruling elite after the emergence of a Soviet-type society. When there appear several Soviet-type economies operating within formally independent states, their integration and the organization of a "socialist international division of labor," in other words the emergence of a Soviet world system, become an absolute necessity for their internal stability and collective survival.

6. An even brief history of the emergence and development of the Soviet world system is beyond the scope of this article. I have already tried to demonstrate that this system emerged after WWII as a byproduct of Soviet attempts to secure firm control over the Soviet zone of influence which in turn led to a rapid Sovietization of Eastern Europe.[20] In the Stalinist period Soviet-East European relations reproduced, to a very considerable extent, typical metropoly-colony relations based on complete political, economic and military domination of East European countries coupled with their economic exploitation. The special role of military domination was demonstrated by the fact that only Yugoslovia which could rely on its strong and patriotic armed forces broke away from the Soviet bloc while Albania's later departure would have been impossible were it not for its geographic location and the absence of the Soviet troops within its borders. As Hutchings put it: "In Stalin's time, unity and stability in Eastern Europe was achieved through a rigidly controlled empire imposed by Moscow and brutally administered by East European leadership thoroughly subordinate to the Soviet Union."[21]

Among the major interpretative models suggested by Western political scientists to analyze Soviet-East European integration, the empire model seems to better reflect the situation which had emerged by the mid-50s.

While characterizing center-periphery relations in the Soviet bloc as a form of imperialism we should not forget that we are drawing on the concept that

much to learn from the West. They will buy, borrow, and steal whatever they can from our civilian as well as military know-how. But they also have more than five thousand research establishments, investing more in research and development than we do. Their greater commitment to basic or "pure" scientific research is bound to pay off in the years to come. The notion that nothing works in the Soviet Union except the armed forces and the KGB is a dangerous illusion." H. Rositzke, *Managing Moscow: Guns or Goods?* (NY: William Morrow, 1984), p. 228.

20. Victor Zaslavsky, "Soviet Society and World Systems Analysis," *Telos,* 62, (Winter 1984-85), pp. 155-168.

21. Robert L. Hutchings, *Soviet-East European Relations. Consolidation and Conflict, 1968-1980.* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983), p. 233.

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has been elaborated in the course of study of systems quite different from the Soviet one. The concept of imperialism should, therefore, be modified to avoid "conceptual stretching"[22] and to grasp the essential novelty of the Soviet system. The Soviet variety of imperialism was not characterized by the center's intention to dominate the periphery for the sake of its exploitation and perpetuating its underdevelopment. The center imposed on the periphery its own structural and developmental models and priorities in the intent of homogenizing all elements of the system.

The concept of "social imperialism" suggested by Galtung[23] is especially relevant for interpreting Soviet-East European relations in Stalin's time. In the case of social imperialism, the center country not only provides structural and functional models for the periphery but it also controls the periphery through ideologically, organizationally and functionally uniform "centers of the periphery" which are subordinated to the "center of the Center" and serve as a "bridgehead for the Center." The policy of social imperialism guarantees an "expansion through isomorphism" of the hegemonic power.[24] The post-war Sovietization of Eastern Europe signified that such a form of control over newly-acquired territories as incorporation had been replaced by the pattern of "structural-institutional" control whereby all territories had the same uniform functional and institutional mechanisms in all parts of their socio-political system. The ruling party of the center controlled the ruling parties of the periphery, while the planning office of the center controlled its peripheral counterparts, imposing the same planning methods, strategies and analogous institutional arrangements. This "structural-institutional control" equally applied to the military, coercive aparatuses, state administrations, etc.[25] The relations of economic exploitation represented an additional and temporary, by no means essential aspect of the center-periphery relations. Eastern Europe provided the Soviet Union with a buffer-zone to be used to protect it against possible enchroachments on its territory and as a potential springboard for a possible offensive against the West.[26] Moreover, it provided the Soviet socio-economic system with both a reinforcement through isomorphism and a strong confirmation of its universal validity.

Therefore, it is correct, but not sufficient to characterize the Soviet empire that emerged by the end of the Stalinist period as a "regional interstate system made up of a single great power and a number of relating small states totally penetrated by the hegemonic power."[27] Seen from another angle, the Soviet

22. Giovanni Sartori, "Concept Misformation in Comparative Politics," *American Political Science Review,* 64:4, (December 1970), p. 1034.

23. John Galtung, "Conflict on a Global Scale: Social Imperialism and Sub-Imperialism — Continuities in the Structural Theory of Imperialism," *World Development,* 4:3, 1976, pp. 153-165.

24. *Ibid.,* pp. 154-156.

25. Radoslav Selucky, *The Present Dilemma of Soviet-East European Integration.* (Cologne: Crises in Soviet-type Systems Project, N7, 1985), p. 8.

26. Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Soviet Bloc.* Rev. edition, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), pp. 4-5.

27. William Zimmerman, "Soviet-East European Relations in the 1980s and the Changing

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policy of social imperialism represented a system-building stage of Soviet-type societies in Eastern Europe. The emergence of a host of Soviet-type societies represented an objective precondition for the future transformation of the initial Soviet empire into an international system constituting a new world system. (The fact that Yugoslavia and then China and Albania after they were excluded from the Soviet bloc managed to maintain many basic characteristics of a Soviet-type society is another example that such society's internal stability depends largely on its specific structure and arrangements even in the absence of a hegemonic military power.)

From the Soviet Empire to the Soviet Bloc: The Problem of Integration

Following the Soviet developmental model, all East European countries at the stage of Soviet-type system-building replicated a largely autarkic development with very high rates of accumulation while industrial advance was fuelled by heavy capital investment and by the provision of a steady flow of labor from the countryside. As a result, in the first decade of state planning, a considerable rate of growth in industrial production has been achieved in all East European countries.[28] At the same time, in many of these countries government demands on the population obviously overstepped the limits considered acceptable and proper and internal tension dangerously accumulated.

The end of the Stalinist period and the consequent de-Stalinization brought about many profound changes in Soviet society's operation and signified the advent of a new development stage, that of system maintenance. The East European periphery followed this evolution of the center. This process was accompanied by outbursts of popular discontent in some key East European countries, leading to an open revolt in 1956 in Hungary that was ruthlessly suppressed by the Soviet armed forces. The new stage of development required new integration policies and mechanisms, for the Soviet empire could no longer be preserved through strictly bilateral relations between the center and peripheral countries, through the reliance on the Soviet model's replication, structural-institutional isomorphism and the coercive control over the periphery. The resulting Soviet Union's policy dilemma has been succinctly identified as the conflict between the requirements of cohesion and those of political-economic viability of the Soviet empire.[29] Cohesion presupposes preservation and development of all the basic principles of

International System," in Morris Bornstein 2et el. eds. *East-West Relations and the Future of Eastern Europe.* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1981), p. 88.

28. W. Brus, *Storia economica dell-Europa orientale, 1950-1980. (Roma: Ed. Riuniti, 1983); L.P. Morris, Eastern Europe Since 1945.* (London: Heinemann, 1984), pp. 73-82; Paul Wiedemann, "Comparing the Process of Socio-economic Development in Market and Non-market Economies: the EEC and CMEA," *Cambridge Journal of Economics,* 1984, 8, pp. 311-330.

29. J.F. Brown, *Relations between the Soviet Union and East European Allies: A Survey.* (Santa Monica: RAND, 1975); Paul Marer, "The Political Economy of Soviet Relations with Eastern Europe," in Sarah M. Terry ed. *Soviet Policy in Eastern Europe.* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), pp. 185-188.

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the Soviet-type society, structural-institutional uniformity, and conformity of domestic and foreign policies between the center and the periphery. Viability requires steady improvement in the population's standard of living and efficient economic performance. These two requirements of cohesion and viability are difficult to reconcile. Viability necessitates economic reforms which should be compatible with basic structural principles of the Soviet-type society and should not threaten the center's fundamental political, ideological and security interests. A greater diversification of institutions and policies is required to confront different problems specific to each East European country. This diversification, however, should not compromise structural-institutional insomorphism, the real basis of cohesion. Finally, East European populations assess the Soviet-type economy's achievements not only by comparing its present performance to that of previous years but also comparing it to the efficiency and standard of living attained by Western industrial economies. The Soviet bloc integration required, therefore, new principles and institutional mechanisms instrumental for achieving a new balance between the system's cohesion and viability.

The process of integration of *sovereign states* with non-market, centrally planned economies is inherently contradictory.[30] An image of a command economy organized along the lines of a huge factory can already be found, at least implicitly, in Marx and explicitly in Kautsky and Lenin. In the same vein, present Soviet official literature reiterates that at an advanced stage of integration all Soviet-type economies will be united in one international economy regulated by a common plan which will encourage free flow of labor, investments and goods among all the participating states.[31] Today nobody, Soviet ideologists included, will take these claims at face value, but a trend towards increased cohesion and higher levels of integration is clearly discernible in the Soviet world system. There is nothing inherently irreversible in this trend, the emergence of which should be understood historically.

As we know, the Stalinist leadership succeeded in sealing off East European countries from the outside world, in establishing bilateral relations of domination-subordination as well as in almost totally restructuring Eastern Europe after the Soviet model. The Stalinist empire represented a conglomerate of virtually closed national economies bent on creating energy- and raw-material- intensive industries irrespective of the resource endowments of particular countries. This endeavor proved to be economically unviable, exploitative, fraught with disruptive tendencies. It could not survive its creator: after Stalin's death and during the period of de-Stalinization the interstate system started moving away from the imperial model. True, structural-institutional homogenization remains the most important foundation of the

30. Hutchings thinks that the very term "integration" is not fully appropriate in this case, "for the process lacks the sense of free and independent states voluntarily relinquishing portions of their sovereignty to achieve some common goal." (Hutchings, *op. cit.*, p. 235)

31. P. Alampiev, O. Bogomolov, Y. Shiryaev, *A New Approach to Economic Integration.* (Moscow: Progress, 1973); O. Bogomolov ed. *Sotsializm i perestroika mezhdunarodnykh ekonomicheskikh otnoshenii* (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya, 1982).

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Soviet bloc and the Soviet leadership has repeatedly demonstrated that it would unhesitantly employ military force to crush any popular revolt threatening to undermine a local one-party regime. But while the use of force remains the *ultima ratio* of the Soviet center, new forms of relations among Soviet-type states found their institutional expression in the activities of the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA), a supranational decision-making body which started vigorously promoting economic integration. The CMEA proclaimed the"building of the socialist world economy into a single entity"[32] as the ultimate, even if long-term goal and emphasized, as short term goals, coordination of national economic planning and production specialization ("international socialist division of labor"). Soviet-type societies' structural-institutional isomorphism, their common effort to protect their political and economic structures from the exposure to world market forces, their consciously pursued policies of production specialization and planning coordination, coalesced into considerable economic integration and interdependence between the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. As Selucky points out, on the one hand, East European economies "became dependent on the USSR in three respects: first, their industries produced mainly for the Soviet market; second, they used Soviet raw materials and energy resources; and third, whenever they got into serious trouble their inner problems were resolved by Soviet aid." On the other hand, the USSR also needed East European goods whose supplies were always guaranteed and whose technological standards suited "quite well the skills, managerial expertise and accepted standards" of the Soviet command economy.[33]

The 1970s détente process created illusions that the newly-achieved military parity with the West was sufficient to compensate for lower levels of productivity. Soviet-type societies began to encourage East-West trade and rely heavily on Western credits and technology to achieve economic growth and steady improvements in living standards. By the end of the decade these illusions collapsed and East-West trade started foundering. Moreover, these economic strategies resulted in political and economic crises in such parts of the Soviet world system as Poland and, to some extent, Romania. These crises demonstrated once again the increasing incompatibility between Soviet-type and Western societies as well as the impossibility for a Soviet type society to enter the world market without profound structural changes. As an Hungarian economist has justly noted, the "decline in the dynamics of East-West trade after 1975 and the emergence of a lasting imbalance can be traced back not so much to market tendencies as to structural factors."[34] It can be concluded that the longer a Soviet-type economy exists alongside Western market economies, the wider the gap between them.

Any East European economy which enters the world market not only will be unable to compete with Western industrial economies but now will have to

32. Quoted in Hutchings, *op. cit.*, p. 25.
33. Selucky, *op. cit.*, pp. 15-16.
34. Bela Kadar, *Structural Changes in the World Economy.* (London: Frances Pinter, 1984), p. 224.

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compete "with the developing countries where labor costs are significantly lower."[35] There always remains the abstract possibility that the West will bail out an East European country, especially if it will lead to a "switching camps" situation, but the cost of such an operation may become prohibitive even in the case of a relatively small country, let alone Eastern Europe as a whole. This lack of alternatives is becoming a powerful background factor of Soviet-East European integration.

There are and there will be considerable tensions between contradictory command and market principles of integration as well as between the interests of individual Soviet-type societies and those of the Soviet world system. But it would be a serious mistake to overlook the fact that from the time of CMEA's inception the mutual trade among its members represented 55 to 60% of their total foreign trade volume[36] or to ignore the vast and growing CMEA infrastructure and steady proliferation of integrative practices and organs, such as new Council committees and coordinating centers, attempts at improved plan coordination, joint investment projects, long-term target programs, etc. Two new factors of integration — so-called "implicit subsidies" and interstate labor transfer — require special attention.

In the 1970s soaring world energy and raw material prices radically altered CMEA terms of trade and resulted in huge "implicit subsidies" (Soviet energy and raw materials deliveries at prices well below prevailing world market prices) granted to Eastern Europe by the Soviet center. According to Marrese and Vanous, during the 1970s these subsidies amounted to almost $80 billion (in 1980 dollars).[37] Soviet economists are now persistently voicing complaints about the unfavorable pattern of trade with Eastern Europe.[38] East European economists can justifiably respond: "Since in the choice of both the integration model and its techniques as well as in the formation of national industrialization policies and management methods the (often too direct) adaptation of Soviet solutions prevailed, it is quite obvious that the 'raw materials for finished products' type division of labor is a by-product and, what is more, an immediate consequence of Soviet priorities."[39] But, surely, even if implicit subsidies are not motivated by altruistic considerations, they represent a powerful factor of economic integration.

Recent developments in international labor transfers may well signify the appearance of a new integration mechanism in the Soviet world system: the Soviet economy is now employing a noticeable and growing number of Vietnamese workers. Third World components of, and Soviet-type regimes within, the Soviet world system merit, therefore, a special discussion.

35. Kadar, *op. cit.*, p. 221.

36. *Dve sistemy mirovogo khosyaistva: antagonisticheskoe edinstvo.* (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya, 1983), p. 179.

37. M. Marrese, J. Vanous, *Implicit Subsidies and Non-market Benefits in Soviet Trade with Eastern Europe.* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983). For a lower estimate see Marer, *op. cit.*, p. 179.

38. *Dve systemy . . . , op. cit.,* pp. 199-212.

39. Laszlo Csaba, "Joint Investments and Mutual Advantages in the CMEA — Retrospection and Prognosis," *Soviet Studies,* 37:2, 1985, p. 230.

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From the Soviet Bloc to the Soviet World System

As Zimmerman had acutely observed, before the 1960s it had been largely appropriate to think of the set of Soviet-type states as constituting the "Soviet bloc" or a "regional interstate system made up of a single great power, the regional hegemon, and a number of relatively small states." But in the subsequent decades, even as the distinctiveness of Soviet-East European relations remained, this hierarchical regional system expanded and evolved into a global system of Soviet-type states headed by the USSR.[40] Now the Third World represents the only likely area of expansion of the Soviet world system.

Initially the Soviet penetration of the Third World was prompted by the perceived congruence between political and economic interests of the Soviet bloc and Third World countries as well as by the perceived complementarity of their economies. Soviet attempts to promote its model in the Third World have been compromised by the hopeless inability of the Soviet bloc economies to provide the massive aid needed for Third World modernization. More realistic assessments of Soviet bloc economic capacities together with a better understanding of increasingly complex problems of underdeveloped countries brought about important changes in Soviet thinking and policies towards the Third World.[41] On the one hand, Soviet adherence to the policy of granting support to the Third World anti-Western movements remains intact. It is not a temporary strategy, but rather a principled policy which stems from the objective incompatibility of Soviet-type and Western industrial societies and will last as long as the competition between two world systems keeps taking the form of the "struggle for the turf." There can be no territorial settlement in the Third World and, as MacFarlane rightly concludes, "it is unrealistic to expect any meaningful comprehensive agreement on rules of the game in relation to Third World conflict or any Soviet adherence to Western conceptions of stability."[42] But, on the other hand, Soviet active role is now limited to granting military and economic aid to certain carefully selected regimes and to preventing the overthrowing of established Soviet-type regimes by external forces. All the rhetoric about common Soviet-Third World interests and speedy transformation from pre-capitalist to socialist formation has been essentially dropped and the idea that backwardness does not provide a basis for the building of a Soviet-type society is now acknowledged by the most influential Soviet official writers.[43] Soviet authors now advise Third World countries to remain attached to capitalist world market, to attract Western capital for the development of the national economy, to make maximum use of their own resources instead of relying on foreign aid.[44]

40. Zimmerman, *op. cit.*, pp. 88-90.

41. For a detailed discussion of these changes see Elizabeth Kridl Valkenier, *The Soviet Union and the Third World. An Economic Bind.* (N.Y.: Praeger Publ., 1983).

42. S. Neil MacFarlane, "The Soviet Conception of Regional Security," *World Politics,* 37:3, April 1985, p. 315.

43. Anatoli Gromyko, *Africa Today: Progress, Difficulties, Perspectives.* (Moscow: Academy of Sciences, 1983).

44. A. Kiva, *Strany sotsilaisticheskoi orientatsii. Osnovnye tendentsii razvitiya.* (Moscow: Nauka, 1979); L.I. Reisner, *Ekonomika razvivayushchikhsya stran.* (Moscow: Nuka, 1979).

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Valkenier has amply documented "the current Soviet interest in depoliticizing development issues and urging sound economic policies on the less developed countries."[45] This contradictory character of the Soviet policy towards the Third World can be explained by the simple fact that political aspirations are not and will not in the foreseeable future be matched by Soviet economic capabilities.

The emergence of Soviet-type regimes in Third World countries cannot be now ascribed to Soviet attempts to export its own model or to generate regional crises. It results from acute internal tensions and crises which determine the character of Third World political development. The Soviet model has not lost its attractiveness for Third World countries for several reasons. First of all, as the examples of Cuba and Vietnam demonstrate, at an early stage of modernization the Soviet model can prove quite efficient in both rapidly mobilizing and disciplining vast strata of the population and realizing radical transformations of an under-developed society.[46] Second, we should not underestimate the appeal of the Soviet system to emerging Third World elites because of its transformational and mobilizational capacities and, more importantly, because of the higher internal stability this system often guarantees by concentrating all political, economic and military power in the party-state apparatus. Third, the USSR has abundant and relatively effective weaponry, which it readily provides to the Third World and which permit efficient functioning of military and security forces. Moreover, the USSR has no record of serious military failures since the Korean war. Finally, strong anti-Western and anti-capitalist attitudes and post-colonial grievances so wisdespread in the Third World countries predispose them to joining or drawing closer to the Soviet bloc. Third World elites are often inclined to adopt Marxist-Leninist ideology. "A secular religion and a dedicated way of life, Marxism-Leninism is the Islam of the non-Islamic world," notices Wiles.[47] Third World Marxists not only adopt often more uncompromising ideological attitudes towards the West than their Soviet patron, but they also demand that Soviet-type societies provide generous aid to "eliminate the impact of the capitalist market" on newly emerged Soviet-type regimes. Thus, a paradoxical situation has emerged. Certain Third World countries, such as Mozambique or Laos, repeatedly apply to join the CMEA only to be repeatedly rejected. The admission would

45. Kridl Valkenier, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

46. Historical examples also demonstrate that in the case of a relatively coherent Western policy and massive aid directed to speeding up social change and modernization such societies as South Korea or Taiwan achieved much better results, measured by economic indicators and standard of living, than their counterparts which rely on the Soviet model. This happened, however, only in the case of some front-line societies located in the zone of direct confrontation between Western and Soviet world systems. In other cases an alternative to the Soviet model seems to be a virtual absence of any Western developmental policy towards the Third World if one does not take into account its penetration by multinational corporations seeking higher returns. For a recent discussion of industrial development in the Third World see James Petras, *Capitalist and Socialist Crises in the Late Twentieth Century.* (Totowa, N.Y.: Rowman-Allanheld, 1984).

47. Peter Wiles ed. *The New Communist Third World. An Essay in Political Economy.* (N.Y.: St. Martin's Press, 1982), p. 359.

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imply sharply increased aid which the Soviet bloc in a period of deteriorating economic performance cannot afford.

It does not mean, however, that the Soviets have adopted an isolationist policy towards the Third World. They simply concentrate their aid on several most promising countries, promising in terms of their strategic importance, levels of economic development, internal stability and the Soviet military capability to prevent coups and foreign invasions. Accordingly, official Soviet theorists demote self-proclaimed Marxist regimes in Africa and Asia to the rank of states with "socialist orientation." They distinguish now between three types of socialist orientation states: those where the socialist orientation is no more than a tendency of social development; those which "have already succeeded in qualitatively changing their political and ideological superstructures and in restructuring of the state apparatus"; and those which not only have restructured the state apparatus but also have achieved a certain level of economic development.[48] Only the latter states have a chance in the foreseeable future to become full-fledged members of the socialist Commonwealth, assert Soviet theoreticians. This is obviously a proposition more about Soviet economic performance and of foreign policy, than about Third World countries' level of modernization and the alleged "irreversibility" of Soviet-type order.[49] The fact remains that the Soviet world system has an obvious growth potential and that within this system the Soviet Union has not only "involuntary allies," as Krushchev once called East European countries,[50] but also voluntary ones.

Soviet Society and Reforms

For the past decade the problem of reformability of the Soviet Union, the Soviet bloc and Soviet-type societies in general has dominated the speculation of both Western analysts and Soviet and East European citizens. Are these societies reformable at all and, if so, how probable are these reforms? What reforms are to be expected and in what part of the Soviet bloc would a successful reform movement have better chances?

As to the last question, some analysts consider East European countries as weak links in the Soviet bloc and assign them the role of an experimental laboratory where reforms can be tested on a small scale. Arato, for example, thinks that reforms leading to the decentralization of the economy might be introduced in Eastern Europe far more easily than in the USSR.[51]

Some other analysts with first-hand experience of designing and implementing reforms in Eastern Europe think otherwise.[52] Up to now the historical

48. Yu. G. Sumbatyan, "Natsionalno-demokraticheskaya revolutsiya: problemy i perspektivy," *Voprosy filosofii,* N5, 1985, p. 114.

49. As Pierre Hassner has pointed out, "countries like South Yemen or Ethiopia appear increasingly to belong to a new, intermediate zone in which the Soviet presence may be less heavy and irreversible than in Eastern Europe but less fragile than was earlier the case in the Third World" (in Terry, *op. cit.,* p. 290).

50. *Khrushchev Remembers: The Last Testament.* Transl. and ed. by S. Talbott. Boston: Little, Brown, 1974, p. 222.

51. Arato, *op. cit.,* p. 183.

52. Andras Hegedus, *La struttura sociale dei paesi dell'Europa orientale.* (Milano: Feltrinelli, 1977);

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experience proved the latter position be closer to reality. On the one hand, all radical reformist movements in Eastern Europe have been crushed by military force. On the other hand, Moscow does not impose restraints on limited institutional change provided that it will lead neither to deep structural changes within a Soviet-type society nor to a profound shift in its foreign policy. But, as Brus points out, in Eastern Europe there are powerful domestic forces which inhibit even modest institutional change.[53]

As to the prospect of reforms in the Soviet center, there is a school of thought which denies even the mere possibility of a reformist movement emergence in the USSR. For example, Castoriadis presents an image of Soviet society's total stagnation and invites his opponents to give "even a rough outline of the 'kind' of reforms having any degree of effectiveness which could be introduced *without* threatening the existing power relations."[54] Let me give an already historical example. In 1956 Soviet workers regained their right to quit jobs at will which had been taken from them in 1940. It was one of the most important elements of the internal reform movement, known as the process of de-Stalinization. The political consequences of this measure were very contradictory. The right to quit a job at will considerably increased the personal rights of Soviet workers while the extent of state bureaucracy's control over the population, eased correspondingly.[55] But at the same time, taking into account that the goal of the Soviet-type economy consists in permanently increasing the state-controlled surplus and that the major mode of economic coordination is "redistribution" of this surplus appropriated by the state,[56] the decision to free workers from their bondage to factories resulted in a considerable growth of this surplus and the ensuing strengthening of the whole socio-political system, power relations included.

As this example demonstrates we cannot discuss "reforms" in Soviet-type

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W. Brus, "Economic Reforms as an Issue in Soviet-East European Relations," in K. Dawisha, Ph. Hanson, *Soviet-East European Dilemmas: Coercion, Competition, and Consent.* (N.Y.: Holmes & Meier, 1981).

53. Brus, "Economic Reforms . . . ," *op. cit.,* pp. 84-88.

54. Cornelius Castoriadis, "A Rejoinder," *Telos,* 53, (Fall 1982), p. 196. Incidentally, Arato accuses me of misrepresenting Castoriadis' ideas and proceeds: "Indeed the picture painted by Zaslavsky of the symbiosis of efficient private plots and inefficient *kolkhozs* is precisely the parallel of Castoriadis' analysis of the functional interdependence of parasitic but modern military sector and the rest of the economy" (Arato, *op. cit.,* p. 185). It is beyond my understanding why Arato imputes to me these views. In my work on this problem I always tried to demonstrate two facts: first, that calling collective farmers' personal plots "private property is unfounded and surely ideologically motivated"; second, that personal plots as a form of labor organization are as inefficient as collective farms themselves, because "the labor of invalids, children, old people and kolkhozniks working nights after a heavy workday cannot be particularly productive, especially as they work small parcels of land (1/8 to 1/2 hectare) by hand, using only spades and other manual tools, unable to employ machinery or to form cooperatives." See A. Pitassio, V. Zaslavsky, "Peasants and Kolkhozes" in Lev Timofeev, *Soviets Peasants.* (N.Y.: Telos Press, 1985), pp. 18,20-21. Some parallel!

55. V. Zaslavsky, *The Neo-Stalinist State. Class, Ethnicity and Consensus in Soviet Society.* (Armonk, N.Y.: Sharpe, 1982), Ch. 3.

56. G. Konrad, I. Szelenyi, *The Intellectuals on the Road to Class Power.* (N.Y.: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1979); F. Feher, A. Heller, Markus, *The Dictatorship Over Needs, op. cit.,* Ch. 2; Ivan Szelenyi, *Urban Inequalities under State Socialism,* (N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1983).

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societies without first defining the term and then checking whether the meaning of the term is unambiguous and remains consistent throughout the argument. This term becomes less ambiguous if we differentiate between two types of reforms. Radical reforms aimed at a qualitative change of society's basic structural principles should be distinguished from rationalization reforms which aim at adjusting and rationalizing the existing socio-economic mechanism without changing it qualitatively. Thus, Yanov defines radical political reforms of Soviet society as a "set of socio-economic and institutional changes moving the system in the direction of political modernization (whether or not they are so designed) — i.e., toward a polity in which political opposition is institutionalized as part of the normal functioning of the state."[57] In other words, one of the basic principles of a Soviet-type society, the one-party state, disappears. Later I will discuss radical economic reforms porposed by Soviet social scientists which, if implemented, would have denied certain structural principles of the current economic mechanism in the USSR. It goes without saying that political and economic aspects of any radical reform are inextricably linked. Discussing the reformability of Soviet society, analysts usually mean only radical reforms because rationalization reforms are now underway and their reality can hadly be disputed. There is nothing wrong in concentrating on radical reforms if the analyst manages to avoid slipping into "crisis thinking", a mode of analysis all too familiar in Sovietology. "Crisis thinking" occurs when a student of Soviet society, having identified major crisis areas of this society, then jumps to the hasty and oversimplified conclusion that Soviet society should either reform or perish. In his otherwise very thought-provoking book, Pipes has recently given us a perfect example of this kind of reasoning. Having outlined many difficulties presently encountered by the Soviets, Pipes optimistically concludes that the Soviet regime is experiencing an economic and political crisis of such gravity that coditions in the country meet the criteria which Lenin has established for "revolutionary situations" and that "the forces making for changing are becoming well-nigh irresistible."[58]

The fallacy of "crisis thinking" has been convincingly demonstrated by Hewett who analyzed the famous 1977 CIA forecast that in the mid-80s the USSR would run out of oil and could even rely on its military force to acquire it. Hewett highlights "the mechanical and oversimplified chain of reasoning" which underlies any exercise of crisis thinking when analysts tend to disregard the complexity of societal dynamics. The CIA 1977 forecast "may well have been correct, *given* the assumption that planners would not or could not react quickly enough to avoid a drastic reduction in energy production."[59] The

57. Alexander Yanov, *The Drama of the Soviet 1960s. A Lost Reform.* (Berkeley: University of California, 1984), p. IX. For a discussion of unspecified "reforms" see Peter Reddaway, "Waiting for Gorbachev," *The New York Review of Books,* October 10, 1985.

58. Richard Pipes, *Survival Is Not Enough. Soviet Realities and America's Future.* (N.Y.: Simon-Schuster, 1984), pp. 200, 280.

59. Ed A. Hewett, *Energy, Economics, and Foreign Policy in the Soviet Union.* (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1984), p. 194.

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conclusion drawn by Hewett applies well beyond economics: "The important lesson of this confrontation between projection and reality is that the Soviet economy is a complex system, richly endowed with resources and managed with enough skill to make it unlikely that economic performance in any sector will ever collapse so rapidly and so dramatically as to put immediate and unavoidable demands on the foreign policy and military establishments."[60]

Yanov has singled out several basic prerequisites of a successful radical reform which include: a strong reformist leader; a consolidated reformist constituency; an adequate strategy of reform and a proper sequence of reformist steps; a favorable international environment.[61] In principle, it cannot be excluded that under certain circumstances all these prerequisites of radical reforms may happen at the same time in the same place. But how probable are such reforms in the foreseeable future?

The Soviets have now a strong leader who is vigorously promoting rationalization reforms and whose support of more radical reforms is not unlikely. More importantly, the existence of a noticeable radical reform constituency should be taken for granted. This reformist constituency has been a permanent, even if not a very vocal actor on the Soviet scene during the past two decades. It seems that the reformist camp is now consolidating. A Soviet sociological journal has recently published results of a highly unusual survey of attitudes towards reforms on the part of party *apparatchiks,* high level economic managers and scientific administrators. Sociologists found, to their own surprise, that 15% to 20% of the members of the political-managerial elite advocated radical reforms.[62] Moreover, radical reforms proponents aspire now at producing a "fully elaborated 'model' for the new economic mechanism."[63] Today Soviet literature is rife with calls for economic and, indeed, political reforms and severe criticisms of the state of economy.[64] Programs of radical reforms are taking shape.

What is radical in these new proposals? I would emphasize one idea which is explicitly or more often implicitly present in many. Radical reformers seem to share Arato's respect for civil society even if they never use the term. Their main concern is, therefore, with structural supports of civil society. The foundation of "independent social life" (Arato's term) and civil society in the West

60. Hewett, *op. cit.,* pp. 194-195.

61. Yanov, *op. cit.,* p. XIV.

62. T.M. Djafarli, Sh. L. Kistauri, B.P. Kurashvili, V.P. Rassokhin, "Nekotorye aspekty uskoreniya nauchno-tekhnicheskogo progressa," *Sotsiologicheskie issledovaniya,* 2, 1983, pp.58-63. Being asked whether considerable economic and technological progress could be achieved *without* any structural transformation of the existing economic mechanism and management system, 48.5% of the respondents answered positively, while 35.5% of "pessimists" denied such a possibility. Then sociologists identified three groups of respondents according to their attitudes towards reforms: supporters of the "stabilization program" which reads "improve everything without changing anything," 30% to 36% of all respondents in different surveys; proponents of moderate reforms, 16% to 28%; advocates of radical reforms, 15% to 20%.

63. "The Novosibirsk Report," *op. cit.,* p. 100.

64. For an analysis of these developments see Archie Brown's articles "Political Science in the Soviet Union: A New Stage of Development," *Soviet Studies,* 36:3, 1984 and "Gorbachev: New Man in the Kremlin," *Problems of Communism,* (May-June, 1985).

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is, in the final analysis, a certain form of property relations, namely private property in the means of production. In this Soviet society has long reached the point of no return: the reintroduction of private property is neither practical nor desirable. But the existing complete nationalization of the economy and the absolute predominance of state ownership are structural prerequisites of the suppression of civil society by the party-state. Correspondingly, some Soviet theoreticians conclude that the realizability of such proposed measures as strengthening the independence of the primary economic unit, increasing the role of market mechanism, reinforcing commodity-monetary relations, democratizing state administration, depends on the introduction of a new structural principle, namely the principle of group or collective property.[65] Next to state property, the principle of group property should be established and gradually advanced via "evolution from above."

A discussion of the feasibility of such a program or its possible success in the light of the experience of Soviet collective farms or Yugoslav self-management is beyond the scope of this article.[66] In theory such a program seems feasible. Under certain conditions it can improve the productivity of labor and drastically reduce waste. In the short run, it can guarantee the partial uncoupling of the economic sphere from politics which Arato justifiably considers an important characteristic of any serious reformist initiative. In the long run, if such reforms are pursued vigorously for a considerable period of time they might generate their own momentum and transform the present organizational principles and power relations so radically that society would lose its Soviet-type character.

In my opinion, however, the chances that the Soviet leadership will embark, voluntarily or not, on a program of more or less radical reforms in this century are minimal. And it is so not only because advocates of radical reforms represent an obvious minority while some 80% to 85% of the political-economic elite do not support or actively oppose any program of radical change. More importantly, the international situation and the character which the competition between Western and Soviet world systems is assuming make such reforms in the USSR highly unlikely. Western developmental trends and conscious policies have a very important impact on the fate of the Soviet reformist movement. Were Western development evolving in the direction of an ever increasing gap between Western and Eastern standards of living and generating greater financial-technological aid to the Third World, the actual socio-economic mechanism of Soviet society would operate under a tremendous strain. We can speculate that a possible withdrawal reaction of the Soviet center — attempts to close ranks and to minimize the population exposure to Western influences — would fail to achieve its goal. Consequently, the Soviet world

65. As Staniszkis has perspicaciously noted, in recent Soviet and Polish literature there are numerous reform proposals which seem to be politically radical (decentralization, self-management), but which do not even mention existing property rights. See T. Staniszkis, "Per una teoria del 'socialismo attuale'," *Est Documentazione* (Florence), January-April, 1985, pp. 6-13. These proposals hardly stand a chance of being implemented.

66. For a useful discussion see Alec Nove, *The Economics of Feasible Socialism, op. cit.*

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system would stop growing and variuos reformist movements would find fertile grounds within the Soviet bloc. (Incidentally, today's proliferation of reformist writings and the beginning of certain rationalization reforms in the USSR have been prompted by the growing gap in living standards between East and West and by the Soviet bloc economic inability to sustain its Third World allies.)

The Star Wars program which the West is currently adopting will dramatically change the conditions of East-West competition. In all likelihood, it will give the Stalinist economic mechanism a shot in the arm.

Star Wars and Soviet Society

The Star Wars program should be understood as one of the possible directions of the Western economic development.[67] This program, if implemented, will have a profound impact on East-West competition. The Star Wars program can be discussed both in terms of its *star* and its *wars* components. As to the latter, the proponents of this program, whatever personal hopes they might have, cannot nurture illusions that an absolute weapon will permit the US to destroy its adversary while enjoying the full safety of its own territory. The conditions of the mutually assured destruction will not be changed by any technological breakthrough because "windows of vulnerability" will always remain and an all-out nuclear war will know no winners. There is another "crisis thinking" kind of argument for engaging the Soviet bloc in a sustained arms race. According to it, the Soviet economy will sooner or later collapse under the double burden of the arms race and the provision of a minimally acceptable standard of living. This is an ideological argument based on ethnocentrism (or sheer ignorance about Soviet society in general and today's economic and military development in particular), or inability to draw conclusions from historical experience, or all of the above. The Soviet socio-economic system, with its predominantly administrative devices for establishing and maintaining a balance between production and consumption, is actually well prepared for a sustained arms race. It operates in a way that "makes the armaments industry the only kind of production for which this economic system is really adequate, for here at least the split between production and consumption disappears."[68]

But the Star Wars program is a developmental strategy in its own right. Brzezinski is undoubtedly correct in predicting that it will have the same effect on American economy as the moon race of the 60s and 70s.[69] The program is designed to preserve American world supremacy in technology and prolong the American economic and military leadership well into XXI century. It will generate numerous spin-offs for civil industries and, more importantly, will orient science and technology to certain problems and tasks which present

67. Piccone and I tried to discuss such a development in "The Socio-economic Roots of Rearmament," *Telos,* 50, (Winter, 1981-82).

68. F. Feher, *et al., op. cit.,* p. 97. See also Alec Nove, "The Class Nature of the Soviet Union," *Soviet Studies,* 35:3, 1983.

69. See *Corriere della Sera,* March 15, 1985.

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generations would not otherwise have even approached. This consideration returns us to the problem of a new character which the world systems competition is assuming.

The *star* component of the Star Wars program means that new arenas of competition are opening, exactly as the "struggle for the turf" might subside. Henceforth, Western and Soviet-type industrial societies will probably pay less attention to the burdensome Third World. After all, overseas conquests — Vietnam, Afghanistan, Ethiopia — have proven in the late twentieth century an expensive and futile endeavor. If both blocs heavily invest in new space technologies and programs, "star competition" rather than "star wars" will follow.

All this should be taken into account while discussing the probable directions of Soviet development. Our assessment of the viability of the existing socio-economic structure and of the probability of radical reforms in the USSR depends on the character of the challenges and tasks the Soviet state is going to encounter. Confronted with such tasks as significantly improving living standards and raising consumer goods production, the Stalinist economic mechanism appears archaic, obsolete and in need of radical reforms. But it remains perfectly up to the task of mobilizing human energies and concentrating material resources on enormous projects like Star Wars or the reversal of flows of Siberian rivers. In this case it requires only adjustment or rationalization reforms. To this extent the preferences of the majority among the Soviet political elite are strongly reinforced by the current international situation. I conclude again that we cannot understand the world in which we live without a world systems analysis that "addresses the global system as encompassing both a Western and a Soviet-type world system and considers their incompatibility, competition and contest as one of the major driving forces of today's historical process."[70]

70. V. Zaslavsky, "Soviet Society and World Systems Analysis," *Telos,* 62, Winter 1984-85, p. 168.

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AFTER MAO: MAOISM AND POST-MAO CHINA

by Edward Friedman

Three misleading notions of post-Mao dynamics pervade thinking on recent reforms in China. In one, a tragic defeat has been suffered by true third-world revolutionaries, Maoists, who were in the process of emancipating the rural poor. In place of Maoism, China is said to be emplanting or re-emplanting a Soviet style system, rationalized Stalinism.[1]

In another understanding of China's reforms, self-reliant socialism has been replaced by dependent capitalism.[2] Post-Mao China has decollectivized agriculture, made price, market and material incentives more central to the economy, accepted the idea of a capitalist Hong Kong as part of China, opened ports and special economic zones to the laws, investments and logic of the capitalist world market and, in search of advanced science and technology, which are needed to modernize the economy and the military and raise living standards, increasingly integrated itself within that market. Labor is being turned into a commodity and a stock market is under discussion.

Only pure Maoists who believe that the Soviet Union is capitalist will insist that these two arguable trajectories, Stalinism and capitalism, are but opposite sides of the same coin.[3] In actual historical practice, Stalinism smashed the market tendencies of Lenin's new economic policies. The two different projects reflect divergent critiques of the future of post-Mao China.[4]

In yet a third misconception of post Mao reform, China is ending the irrationalities of a Stalinist command economy along with the tyranny of the Leninist police state while also abandoning the waste and violence of Maoism which had intensified the worst elements of Leninist-Stalinism and brought extreme suffering and deprivation to the people of China. In this view, China's reformers are pioneering a path which holds open a prospect of fundamentally improving the lives of the vast majority and, for the first time, democratizing a typical third world Leninist dictatorship.[5]

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1. See Bill Brugger, ed., *Chinese Marxism in Flux 1978-84*, (London: Croom Helm, 1984).
2. See Terry Cannon, "China's Open Door," *Third World Quarterly*, July 1984, pp. 717-732; cf. the writings of Jan Myrdal, Orville Schell and William Hinton.
3. See the writings of Charles Bettelheim and Raymond Lotta.
4. See my "Maoism, Titoism, Stalinism," *The Transition to Socialism in China*, in Mark Selden and Victor Lippit, eds., (Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1982), pp. 159-214, and Dorothy Solinger, ed., *Three Visions of Chinese Socialism*, (Boulder: Westview, 1984).
5. See Roger Garside, *Coming Alive*, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1981); the collected essays of Tsou Tang to be published in 1986 by the University of Chicago Press; and the discussion of this democratic potential in Andrew Nathan, *Chinese Democracy*, (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1985) and

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While those who see China abandoning a healthy Maoism for a diseased Stalinism or capitalism in fact have little understanding of what Maoism was all about (the post-Mao reforms have been truly liberating and life-enhancing), nonetheless, the third notion, the idea that the reformers have found a path to an emancipatory project, ignores the overwhelming political reality that the reforms occur within largely unchanged Leninist-Stalinist structures which virtually guarantee a sharp limit to the reforms and may well threaten a reaction against them by the entrenched Stalinist apparatuses which can bring a turn to Stalinism or even a military dictatorship. In short, the political struggle occurs within an unquestionable Leninist polity. With Maoist fundamentalists defeated, the political struggle is within and between prestigious and traditional Stalinists, on the one hand, and vigorous and innovative Titoist reformers, on the other. Pro-Maoists outside of China, who identify with the powerful enemies of reform in China, unintentionally place themselves on the side of Stalinism while sincerely believing they are opposing Stalinism. They misunderstand the relation of Maoism to Stalinism.

Outside of China, Maoism originally won support as an alternative to Stalinism. China split from the Soviet-bloc and Mao denounced the Soviet path as one that led away from socialism to rule by a new class of Party bourgeoisie. Some Trotskyists even abandoned their Trotskyism or saw it fulfilled in Maoism, taken as the antithesis of Stalinism. Third-world revolutionaries saw Maoism as a call to armed action in place of traditional Moscow-backed Communist parties who had grown comfortable with the status quo. Armed struggle, class struggle and identification with the needs of the poorest of the rural poor were seen as making Maoism a genuine socialist alternative to the privileged, corrupt, statist, even if now non-terroristic, essence of Stalinism. Che, Ho and Fanon were seen as fighting the same battles as Mao. Samir Amin praised Cambodia's Pol Pot for bringing the liberating process of Maoist socialism to fruition.[6]

Once one sees that Pol Pot-ism is the logical extension of Maoism, then an analysis of Maoism as a hope-filled antithesis of a Stalinism which exploited the peasantry to industrialize the state is revealed as a mish-mash that must be straightened out to clarify what Maoism actually was if one would comprehend where post-Mao China is heading. A most dangerous approach to the issue, one that makes future Pol Pots more likely, as with Sendero Luminoso in Peru, is that of people who blame Cambodian Communism's inordinate inhumanities on American bombing, which supposedly drove Cambodian liberators into a murderous madness.[7] Such an approach is

Stanley Rosen's and Jon Unger's editing of the debates of China's democratic Marxist dissident Wang Xizhe to be published in 1986 by M.E. Sharpe. Wang is serving a 14 year prison sentence for his publishing activities.

6. Recommending the Cambodian Communist policies for Africa, Amin wrote, "The principal contradiction here is between the peasantry as a whole and the capital which dominates it — symbolized by the town." See *Imperialism and Underdevelopment*, (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1977), p. 150.

7. The best argued statement of the bombing thesis appears in Ben Kiernan, *How Pol Pot Came to Power*, (London: Verso, 1985). In his illuminating scholarly study, Kiernan, in addition,

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similar to the long discredited argument that the deformities of socialism in the Soviet Union were caused by capitalist encirclement. Instead, we need to unearth the institutional, interest and ideological overlap and common roots of Maoism and Stalinism, especially the sources of their most malignant and murderous dynamics.

Mao often declared that his goal was to build on and to realize the socialist project which Stalin had begun and which Tito, who decollectivized Yugoslav agriculture, supposedly had abandoned. Maoism is not an alternative to Stalinism in the countryside but, as with the political economy of agriculture, in significant part an addition of alienating irrationalities to the pre-existing inefficiencies and inhumanities of collectivization. It is related to, yet distinct from, Stalinist collectivization, which may compromise with a peasantry and permit rural workers a small private plot. That concession to self-interest turns out great productivity.

Maoism, on the other hand, withdraws the concession and ends private plots, household sidelines and petty marketing. Maoism treats the small pieces of sanity within the inhumanity of Stalinism as seeds of capitalism and Titoism. The anti-economic disincentives and controls of the alienating Stalinist collective which permit the socialist state to siphon off the rural surplus are thus intensified to an extreme degree by the anti-economic policy thrust of Maoism that treats the workable economics of petty production, which even Stalinism grudgingly concedes, as seeds of capitalism which must be dug out and destroyed. If Stalinism, as Mao put it, drains the pond to catch the fish, then Maoism, in addition, keeps the fish scrawny. Thus the bad is made worse. Maoism intensifies and exaggerates some of the worst aspects of Stalinism.

This is a difficult idea for many well-meaning observors to accept. They were nurtured on the notion that Stalinism was the worst thing that could befall a peasantry and that Maoism, in contrast, was a pro-peasant posture. It is a fact that Mao led a peasant revolution which carried out an excellent land reform. But Mao then coercively collectivized that land owned by tillers and built on the proclaimed socialism of Stalinist collectives. Thus Mao, in power, turned against what Chinese peasants considered to be in their own interest. In addition, Maoism declared political warfare on other institutions cherished by and supportive of peasants — not only market, private plot and trade but also family, religion, custom and tradition. That such an accentuation of Stalinist inhumanity carries yet more cruelty is both logically necessary and

however, argues that earlier when Pol Pot was in Beijing in 1966, he was confronted by the slaughter of Indonesia's "moderate" Communist Party and the alternative stragegy of Maoist Naxalities in India who whould rely on poor peasants and a policy "of annihilating class enemies through guerrilla actions" in rural areas, while the Phnom Penh authorities warned the Cambodian Communists that they might soon be treated as had the massacred Communists in Indonesia; consequently Kiernan shows Pol Pot set out on an absolutist, poor peasant, anti-urban, life or death exterminist path long before bombs massively and murderously fell on villages, temples and guerrilla forces (pp. ix, 324, 235, 252, 263). Kiernan also shows that eastern Cambodia, where most of the bombs fell, was least receptive to Pol Pot's policies.

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historically inevitable as proved in Cambodia in the Pol Pot era. That consequences worse than Stalinism ravaged China, as Cambodia, should be similarly obvious.

There are two major reasons why certain "progressive" people have missed China's rural catastrophe. First, Marxism misleadingly teaches that private property is the essence of modern exploitation. Hence something like collectives or Maoism's more total war on private property is assumed somehow to be superior, to be welcome to peasants.[8] Second, Chinese ruling groups have chosen to hide much of their rural disaster.

The Chinese socialist state's seizure and monopolization of grain in the early 1950s led to a substantial increase in infant mortality. Only one inner Party document on that early famine has been made public. It describes starving peasants in wealthy Zhejiang Province fleeing or eating tree bark and roots in a frantic effort to survive.[9]

No public disclosure has been permitted on how collectivization in 1955-6 intensified rural misery, although we know that much of the party leadership opposed the little leap forward and succeeded by early 1956 in getting Mao to accept an end to that wasteful and alienating campaign.[10]

But one finally gets an idea of just how far Chinese ruling groups have gone — and continue to go — in hiding the death and devastation wrought by Maoism by their continuing unwillingness to allow people to learn about the famine of 1959 to 1961 which, demographers agree, killed 20 to 30 million people.[11] far more human beings than died in 1984 and 1985 in Africa's famine. So weighty and pervasive is China's Leninist police state, so powerful is its nationalistic pride, so worrisome is the fear it engenders in its people, that Chinese ruling groups have successfully hidden from the world a catastrophe of most enormous proportions.

China's great anthropologist, Fei Xiaotong, in a recent village study, writes that comment in the west makes it unnecessary for Fei to elaborate on this immense catastrophe.[12] Fei merely mentions in passing that even in the relatively well-off village he has probed in depth, "the wives of 23 men went away to beg, thus leading to divorce."[13] In other words, within the patriarchal village, households hoarded food for their blood members by booting out women who had married into the village from elsewhere and therefore had no

8. To find how untrue that is, see Antia Chan *et al.*, *Chen Villages*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984) and Fei Hsiao Tong, *Chinese Village Close-up*, (Beijing: New World Press, 1984).

9. In *Dangshi yanjiu ziliao* (*Materials for the Study of Party History*), vol. III, (Chengdu: Sichuan People's Publishing Hnuse, 1982), pp. 693-708.

10. This catastrophe will be detailed in Edward Friedman, Kay Johnson, Paul Pickowicz, Mark Selden, *Chinese Village, Socialist State*, (University of California Press, 1986).

11. See Basil Ashton *et al.*, "Famine in China, 1958-61" *Population and Development Review*, Spring 1985, pp. 613-645. Some scholars who suspect that the official death rate figure for 1961 is a gross underestimation suggest that the number who died in the Maoist famine may have exceeded 50 million. There is no way the death toll can be below 13 million.

12. Fei, *op. cit.*, p. 200.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 251.

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supportive networks or legitimate survival claims to protect them. Only short stories, the least censored written form in China, reveal the widespread horror of women abandoned to wander and beg and scrounge and starve.[14] My own research in rural China suggests strongly that rural women were major victims of Mao's great leap famine, even while foreign friends of Mao's leap continue to celebrate this tragedy for women as a liberation of women. China's silence till today permits foreign Maoists not to experience a need to explain why Maoism brought so much famine, uprooting, stagnation and decline to the rural poor. Even when visiting a country where many people starved to death, Myrdal claims not to be able "to jibe" what he sees with accounts of massive beggary.[15]

By looking into some of the general historical and emotional forces which make for Maoism, we can see more clearly why a Maoist theoretical embrace of the rural poorest in the third world countryside ends up in practice painfully damaging their interests. It is not because Mao wished ill to such people. Rather Maoism is a fundamentally flawed analysis which, given Leninist-Stalinist institutions and Marxist concepts, cannot help but bring extreme misery and suffering to the rural poor whom it would help, a Typhoid Annie whose embrace spreads a disease, a King Canute whose touch can kill.

Within Marxist-Leninist presuppositions and Stalinist institutions, Maoism is a set of policy preferences among passionately patriotic third world anti-imperialists who seek a non-capitalist path of development that will bring true and total independence and avoid all penetration by a capitalism that makes for imperialism, national humiliation and suffering unto death. In Mao's home province of Hunan, during his youth, treaties imposed by foreign nations made it illegal to hold rice back from international commerce to distribute below the world price to starving Chinese. Local Chinese opposition to international commercial civilization was found by foreign traders and their governmental representatives to be an uncivilized piece of churlishness. The widespread and most legitimate national fury and outrage in China caused by the inhumanities generated by foreign power lead on, however, to counter-productive Maoist solutions when meaning is based on Lenin's peculiar interpretation of why the proletariat does not make a socialist revolution in advanced capitalist societies.

Lenin, in his essay on *Imperialism*, described a new and final stage of capitalism which took the form of global imperialism. The capitalist stage called imperialism lost the progressive and creative character of capitalism. Capitalism became parasitic. It took by violent domination super-profits from poor and backward peoples. The consequence of imperialism was that backward nations were rendered dependent while the metropolitan bourgeoisie was provided the plunder with which to economically bribe and politically neutralize a labor aristocracy in the metropolis, "corrupting the upper strata of the proletariat." Socialists who could appeal only to so-called

14. See Zhu Lin, "The Webb," *Renditions*, No. 16 (Augumn 1981), pp. 113-121.
15. Jan Myrdal, *Return to a Chinese Village*, (New York: Pantheon, 1984), p. 45.

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economistic concerns of this bribed and corrupted proletariat would find the proletariat non-revolutionary. Hence, in the era of imperialism, the world was divided between corrupt metropolis and plundered periphery, blood-sucking usurers and impoverished debtors, a global division which Lenin found to be congruent with the economic and geographical split between town and country, industry and agriculture.

While every link in this chain of logic has been taken apart by historians and found faulty, the manichean picture Lenin paints is politically satisfying and inspiring to patriotic third-world intellectuals embarrassed into action by the narrow greed of their rulers who ape the worst aspects of foreign life and the abandonment to monumental misery by urban-oriented regimes of their rural poor. Such concerned patriots have taken the Leninist chain of anti-imperialist logic in a direction which Lenin himself never moved. These third-world supro-Leninists conclude that the suffering people in the dependent, indebted agricultural countryside of the world can be liberated only if the dependent bonds of the super-exploitative metropolis could be broken. Hence, with the metropolitan proletariat rendered corrupt, the true human liberation promised in Marxist teleology would have to be the work of the rural poor of the colonial, semi-colonial and neo-colonial world, the true wretched of the earth who had nothing to lose but their chains, the poor peasants and not the prospering industrial proletariat.

Fanon found the native proletariat to be pampered and privileged beneficiaries of the corrupt order, found countrypeople considering townspeople to be turncoats and traitors, while "the peasants alone are revolutionary."[16] Fanon described civilization as "the history of pillage," European wealth as "stolen from the underdeveloped peoples." Yet he found that "political action in the towns will always be powerless to overthrow or modify the colonial regime," that "trade unions will give proof of their inefficiency and . . . anachronistic nature . . . ." Consequently, revolution would have to rise from the backward countryside, "the true voice of the country" "since this peasantry constitutes the only spontaneous revolutionary force of the country . . . ."[17]

In like manner, Che Guevara found that "the workers of the imperialist countries gradually lose their international class spirit under the influence of a certain complicity in the exploitation of the dependent countries and . . . this fact . . . wears away the militant spirit of the masses within their own national context . . ."[18] The popular and powerful passions which made leaders and theorists of the armed, rural poor find themselves the only savior of their people and the world have been spelled out not only by Fanon and Che but also lived out by Mao[19] and Pol Pot and numerous others. Regis Debray wrote

16. Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, (New York: Grove Press, 1963), pp. 108, 109, 112, 61.

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 51, 101, 102, 126, 112, 120, 123.

18. Che, "Man and Socialism in Cuba," in *Man and Socialism in Cuba*, Bertram Silverman, ed., (New York: Atheneum, 1973), p. 341.

19. I detail the Chinese and Maoist sources in "Maoist Conceptualizations of the Capitalist

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down these concepts which he found among armed Latin American rural leaders. Explicating Fidel's insistence on "hegemony for the rural guerrillas," of "*all resources* to the Sierra," Debray states, "As we know, the mountain proletarianizes the bourgeois and peasant elements, and the city can bourgeoisify the proletariat."[20] Fidel's former ally Carlos Franqui describes "the city dweller [as those], whose ideals are those of the United States — money, power, conspicuous consumption, skyscrapers, air conditioning." He writes that Fidel "hated the city."[21]

Debray found Latin American anti-imperialist fighters building on Lenin's notion that the socialist revolution occurs at the weakest link in the chain of imperialists. "Weak link" is taken to mean less corrupted by urban forces. This is because in social strata in the metropolis, "even the least favored strata are integrated into modern society."[22]

With even the one potentially hopeful urban group, the industrial proletarian, taken as compromised, the Maoist world view shared by theorists of rural, anti-imperialist revolution thereby legitimated a war on decadent, foreign, soft and corrupted urban dwellers, on intellectuals and administrators, on markets and money and all feudal and bourgeois forms — money, the commodity, value — which constrained commitment to allegedly total liberation, including negating things such as religion, tradition and family. If only the dross and dirt of the old exploitation, feudalism, and the modern exploitation, capitalist imperialism, were removed, then true communism, a solidaristic egalitarianism of the rural poor, would appear and flourish.

There is no understanding Maoism unless it is comprehended within the attractiveness of what it aspired for, an authentic communism springing from native soil, the universal embodied in the nationally particular, and what it negated and hated, the foreign and the parasitically wealthy who allowed

World-System," *Processes of the World System* (Terence Hopkins and Immanuel Wallerstein, eds., Beverly Hills, Sage Publications, 1980), pp. 181-223.

20. Regis Debray, "Revolution in the Revolution," *Monthly Review* 19.3 (July-August 1967), pp. 76-77.

21. Carlos Franqui, *Family Portrait with Fidel*, (New York: Random House, 1984), pp. 34, 150. Franqui continues, "The macho idealizes the country because the city, for him, is the scene of degeneration and homosexuality. 'In the countryside, there are no homosexuals,' Fidel would say to me." There obviously are consequences to rooting oneself in a patriarchal, macho, xenophobic political culture as there are in the proletariat being full of super patriotic, hard-hat feelings of anger toward the underclass. Writing about the struggle in Algeria, Frantz Fanon noted, "Every veil that fell, every body that became liberated from the traditional embrace of the *haik* . . . was a negative expression of the fact that Algeria was beginning to deny herself and was accepting the rape of the colonizer." See *A Dying Colonialism*, (New York: Evergreen, 1957), p. 42. While Fanon's hope was that revolutionary violence would transcend such nativistic fundamentalism, in fact, it in part institutionalizes it. Racist, hate-filled fundamentalism is not peculiar to Ayatollah Khomenei, but reflects the painful contradictions involved in modernizing a tranditional society. Ruling groups in Hanoi out to discredit Pol Pot reveal their own racist roots by first arguing that some Chinese blood ran in Pol Pot's veins. Pol Pot's monumental racism was very popular in Cambodia and shared by his adversary Lol Nol.

22. Regis Debray, *Strategy for Revolution*, (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1970), pp. 63 and 42. When Debray contends that in the guerrilla struggle the army in the rural center is proletarianized (p. 68), he means, in traditional Leninist fashion, that this group can legitimately seize and control the levers of state power and smash and suppress all opposition.

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rural people, indeed, condemned such helpless people, to short lives and painful deaths. This potent combination of hope and hate permitted Mao time and again to slight the mere lessons of passing reality, the decline caused by (1955-6) collectivization, (1958-60) communalization, the (1967-70) anti-capitalism of the Cultural Revolution and the (1974-6) campaign to cut capitalist tails. Indeed, Mao had already seen and backed away from class struggle policies in the countryside in the 1930s for appeals that actually attracted peasants. One finally gets a true feel for how the deep ideological attractiveness of Maoism transcended petty practical consequences by the Party's return to those Maoist class struggle policies in the mid-1940s when, with the very survival of the movement at stake as the civil war moved to a climax, the Maoists persuaded themselves somehow that programs of class struggle — which had alienated the peasantry a decade earlier — would nonetheless help win a revolutionary civil war and at the same time build a purified Party with village power in the hands of the rural poorest. Of course, nothing of the sort resulted.

In the middle 1940s Mao decided that his movement was full of impure people. They had to be transformed and/or replaced. Patriots who had fled Japanese-occupied cities, usually high school students, who joined the revolutionary movement were then sent into villages to reside with the poorest of the poor, to share their life and to learn who and what had victimized them. Then the persons sent into many thousands of villages would incite these most victimized individuals to attack publicly the cruel local people who had oppressed the poor. Meetings would be held. Hate would be provoked. Inevitably — indeed, for Mao, hopefully — violence would explode. The masses would "spontaneously" beat and kill their oppressors. In that act, as Mao — or Fanon — would have it, the victim would gain confidence and consciousness, thus becoming worthy of enrollment into the Party and service and office in the emerging socialist state. The poor would then unite on the side of the revolutionary armies and help overthrow, once and for all, the dominion of reaction. They would seize and equitably distribute the misgotten wealth of the locally powerful of the old order. Thus a united mass of the poor would materially benefit, see the light and fight to preserve their gains.

Of course, nothing like this occurred. What is amazing is that Mao could have believed in this myth of the purifying power of violence, a myth also propagated by Che. The issue is not defeating in combat the murderous armies of state reaction so as to give confidence to frightened, powerless people that their side can win: the issue is purifying people through personal acts of violence against neighbors, who have family and friends, with the violence labeled class struggle, with the struggle of the violent fulfilling the deeper promise of the overthrow of the ruling class by expropriating and expropriators, by taking their land, possessions and means of production, and the redistributing such wealth so all in the village could live decently.

In the early 1930s in his first base area, Mao had already seen that such

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policies failed and then denounced the policies as left excesses. They failed again between 1943 and 1946. That is, the policies of violence and theft frightened people. Some were paralyzed at the cruel revenge that awaited them if their side lost. Others fled to the other side. The majority of villagers were terrified that their little property also was at risk. The movement split. Consequently such campaigns had to be called off.

What won local people to the revolutionary side was something very real — honest, hard-working leaders who treated people decently and fairly, creating confidence that work would be rewarded, that futures could be planned by families, that popular notions of justice would prevail. The removal of corrupt and vicious local rulers (not always the rich) was liberating. So were the reforms which ended the worst economic and social cruelties (e.g., unpaid labor, usurious interest, fixed scales, rape). These achievements led to a tremendous release of productive energies and massive enrollment in the revolutionary armies.

So why between 1946 and 1948 did Mao revert to violent, thieving policies of so-called class struggle? Those destructive campaigns had their predictable result, alienating support, not winning it. The campaigns were quickly called off, yet again. And, in the last year of the civil war, 1948-1949, they stayed off the political agenda.

It turned out once again that taking from the rich to distribute to all did not create a feeling of equity and solidarity. There was not even enough wealth to go around. So some of those thought rich were tortured. And those who had the next level of wealth then naturally felt they would be the next targets.

In truth, more wealth had to be created to transcend the poverty which actually was suffered also by those seen as prosperous. Electricity, toilets, running water, windows, paved roads, sewers, scientific farm inputs, the whole modern world, was universally unavailable in the village no matter how one redistributed the pittance above subsistance that existed in the poor, backward, Chinese countryside.

Worse yet, the Maoist world view leads to the conclusion that if the poor are not enriched by this class struggle, then it must be because the class struggle was not thoroughly carried out. That conclusion leads to a search for class enemies in the movement who are seen objectively as the allies of counter-revolution, the enemies of the oppressed. Such stones holding down the powerless people had to be lifted off the backs of the poor through great struggle. This notion of class struggle as a road to social justice actually promotes the violent and their violence and precludes the creation of general prosperity since any individuals (or any group) who prosper have to fear they too will become targets of class struggle.[23] The Maoist socialist state would be

23. For an introduction to these self-defeating "excesses" of 1940's class struggle policies, see Tanaka Kyoko, "Mao and Liu in the 1947 Land Reform," *The China Quarterly*, No. 75 (Sept. 1978), pp. 566-593; Frederick Teiwes, "The Origins of Rectification," *The China Quarterly*, No. 65 (Jan. 1976), pp. 38-49; Suzanne Pepper, *Civil War in China*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), pp. 229-330.

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staffed by the fighters of the army and the militia with their militaristic virtues modal.

The tragedy and irony in Maoism is multiple. The revolutionary Mao, the son of a rich peasant trader, insists that only the poorest of the poor can be revolutionary. Children of wealth who abandon their easy life to serve the poor are treated as the targets and enemies of the poor. The hope for ending poverty is nullified by identifying the causes of poverty with outmoded notions of class and wealth actually guaranteed to keep people needlessly poor. Hence, inherent in the categories, worldview and policies of Maoism are the endless campaigns of purposeless violence and economic irrationality that it did in fact produce.

One explanation of why Mao would embrace and act on notions which time and again proved their worthlessness in practice is their theoretical attractiveness to those who hopefully seek a speedy solution to the misery of the rural wretched of the third world within real hates and unreal but attractive abstractions which stem from Marx and Lenin.

The statist reality that coercively gave content to these notions subsequently facilitated treating all those outside the privileged orbit of a "proletarianized" state sector ruling group as virtual slave or corvee labor to dig irrigation dikes where ordered, level the land as directed, and grow grain as commanded. While radicals are supposed to be committed to empowering the disenfranchised, Maoist policies left the dragooned rural poor passive, privatized and powerless. Maoism attacked commodification where workers could seek a wage but then reduced laborers to less than a commodity where they had no control over where they would toil, what job they would labor at or even whether they would be paid. Not to understand the magnitude of this oppressive Maoist reality prevents one from comprehending why post-Mao rural reforms in China have been so joyously liberating.

Maoist ruling groups, however, experienced the world in terms of their supra-Leninism which permitted them to see those sacrificed by purifying Maoist policies as small obstacles on a narrow and unique one-lane road to a communist paradise. Their politics was infused with the feeling that the alternative — the world they would negate — imperialism, was Hitlerian, totalitarian and genocidal. Chinese Maoists portrayed Khrushchev as worse than Hitler by discovering that while Hitler failed to destroy socialism in the Soviet Union, Khrushchev had succeeded. Thus the emotion was fostered that not to destroy all enemies to Maoist socialism was to permit a turn to a reality worse than Hitler. Consequently it would be immoral, inhuman and cruel to limit the use of state power against purported leprous groups by these true, pure, socialist revolutionaries. Such Leninists loved Lenin's statement that "The state is an instrument for coercion. Formerly this was the oppression of the entire nation by a bunch of moneybags . . . . We want to organize coercion in the interests of the working people."[24] Their view was that murderous im-

24. In Maoist China, this view that the state is a coercive apparatus used to destroy class enemies made it seem a normal historical practice to unleash force against those deemed class enemies.

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perialism had created a new, universal class of the totally deprived, the colonized of the rural periphery, who must violently reclaim themselves and the world by using that coercive apparatus and warring on the metropolitans and the metropolis. Purported revolutionary violence was seen as the liberating alternative to the enslavement and death of imperialist, fascist, genocidal domination. There supposedly was no middle way between death and life.

Fanon took as a legitimate symbol of this abandonment of the death-grip of urban civilization for the life of the primitive interior Brazil's decision to move its capital away from Rio de Janero.[25] The evil to be extirpated included not only the colonized city, the bourgeoisie, the foreign sounding, the educated and even the proletariat but, for Fanon as well as Mao, both of whom saw that the single-party Leninist dictatorship could easily be corrupted, also the potential new class of Party rulers corrupted by this supposedly unrevolutionary urban reality.[26]

With the city, including the proletariat and potentially the Party, treated as foreign, imperialistic and oppressive, as privileged, parasitic and counter-revolutionary, Cuba for a short while promoted Maoism. Che promised to write a book on Fanon. The economic disaster caused by Cuban Maoism, however, sped Fidel's decision for economic recovery according to a version of soviet Stalinism.[27]

Pol Pot's Cambodian Communist Party, on the other hand, chose to use the Leninist state's organs of coercion to force people on the Maoist path toward the solidaristic egalitarianism seen as the essence of Marx's communism.[28] The Secretary General for the Finnish Inquiry Commission on Kampuchea, writes of the Cambodian Communist Party whose Secretary General was Pol Pot: "the Chinese communists were ideologically the only outside group from which to draw support, although the Kampuchean communists represented the same kind of extreme leftism as that of the 'gang of four' . . ."[29] Prince Sihanouk found that "Pol Pot wants to be like Mao Zedon."[30] Writing before

25. *The Wretched of the Earth, op. cit.*, p. 187. Fanon, however, did not think Brasilia much better.

26. This potentially democratic concern of Mao is vitiated by his Stalinist heritage of concepts and institutions which leads Mao into a more murderous direction. See my, "The Societal Obstacle to China's Socialist Transition: State Capitalism or Feudal Fascism," *State and Society in Contemporary China*, Victor Nee and David Mozingo, eds., (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), pp. 148-171. Apparently Pol Pot's administrators lived in the countryside and collectively commuted to work in the capital city.

27. Fidel and Che never embraced Mao's position of trying to wipe out the strata of technically and scientifically educated people. Instead, Cuba tried to expand the number of such educated specialists.

28. Mao, in contrast, contended that a continuing set of manipulated mass campaigns would eventually transform popular consciousness.

29. Kimmo Kiljunen, "Power Politics and the Tragedy of Kampuchea During the Seventies," *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 17.2 (April-June 1985), p. 52.

30. *Prince Sihanouk on Cambodia*, (Hamburg: Institute of Asian Affairs, 1980), p. 25. Michael Shari in *In These Times* (September 18-24, 1985, p. 9) writes of Pol Pot's "psychopathic version of Mao's Great Leap Forward . . ." Ben Kiernan details Pol Pot's Chinese-style version of Marxism-Leninism in "Pol Pot and the Kampuchean Communist Movement" in Kiernan and Chanthou Boua, *Peasants and Politics in Kampuchea, 1942-1981*, (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1982). Also see

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the Cambodian Communists came to power, Malcolm Caldwell and Lek Tan noted that those "guerrillas [were] influenced by Maoist thinking."[31] *The Killing Fields* depicts the content of this Maoism whose historical roots I have explicated. Dith Pran reports Cambodian Communist officials declaring, "We made the revolution so . . . the peasants who produce should not be the slaves of the townspeople who consume . . . . It is our Great Leap Forward to a better, more just society; like China . . . [o]ur Communist experiment is superior . . ."[32]

The official position of the Soviet Union is that the Pol Pot clique taught illiterate young Cambodian peasants that "the main reason for their hard life in the past and the principle obstacle to their future happiness were the people of the cities . . ." The goal of the revolution was a "people reborn, cleansed of foreign filth," rid of everyone infected by culture, abolishing towns and working instead with hoes. Refugees reported that "The Pol Pot men told us that communism was being built in Kampuchea. Communism meant a society *without a state, without the family, without a market or money, without* religion." Family names were abolished. Communist officials explained, "Cities are evil. There are money and trade in cities, and both have a corrupting influence. That is why we shall do away with cities." This policy was seen as "eliminating classes and private property." In short, the Pol Pot Communists tried in one step coercively to achieve the promise of Mao's great leap and "followed the pattern of the Chinese 'cultural revolution' by forcibly resettling hundreds of thousands of townspeople in the countryside, so that 'they could learn from the popular masses.' "[33]

It was, of course Francois Ponchaud, in *Cambodia Year Zero*, who first publicized this murderous Maoist ideological reality while Pol Pot held power. Ponchaud wrote that he discovered that the Cambodian Communist reason for emptying the capital, Phnom Penh, "was an ideological one," that he dis-

William Shawcross, "The Burial of Cambodia," *The New York Review*, May 10, 1984, pp. 16-20. In his magnificent study, *Sideshow: Kissinger, Nixon and the Destruction of Cambodia* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979), Shawcross describes how in 1959, the apparent moment, I would add, of greatest success of Mao's great leap, future Cambodian Communist leader, Khieu Samphan completed his Paris dissertation arguing "that the cities were parasitical" which required "a transfer of the population out of the towns into productive work" (p. 240). Shawcross agrees with the Vietnamese government view "that the Cultural Revolution has been copied by Phnom Penh in a hasty, but no less horrible manner" (p. 382).

31. *Cambodia in the Southeast Asian War*, (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1973), p. 335. David Hawk, former executive director of Amnesty International, found that the Cambodian Communist elite, "The leaders of this revolution, the avant-garde, had all studied in Paris and had developed their own hybrid version of Marxism/Leninism/Stalinism." (*The Daily Cardinal* [Madison, Wi.], June 27, 1985, p. 6.) Already in 1972, Cambodian Communist adversaries of Pol Pot denounced his line and "the 'Red Chinese' model" (Kiernan, *How Pol Pot Came to Power, op. cit.*, p. 338).

32. Christopher Hudson, *The Killing Fields*, (New York: Dell, 1984), p. 251. As Haing S. Ngor, who played Dith Pran, had it explained to him while in Cambodia, the Communist policy was to "turn the city into the countryside and the countryside into the city." See *The Free China Journal* (Taibei), April 28, 1985, p. 3.

33. E.V. Kobelev, Compiler, *Kampuchea: From Tragedy to Rebirth*, (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1979), pp. 45, 50, 51, 79, 81, 118, 168.

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covered that the Communists had been forceably emptying towns since 1972, that on April 18, 1975 he listened to a Communist official declare, "The city is bad, for there is money in the city. People can be reformed, but not cities."

Indeed, Ponchaud catalogued how the Cambodian Communists invoked Maoist slogans (e.g., "agriculture is the foundation and industry is the dominant factor,") Maoist categories (e.g., throwing off the three oppressive mountains; poor and lower middle peasants), Maoist processes (collectivation by stages, great leaps forward including night work, destruction of pots and pans, eating together in mess halls or eating in the fields), Maoist strategies (attacking and destroying the intelligentsia as a stratum) but ignored Zhou Enlai's advice on moderation.[34] Indonesian analysts believe that it was Zhou's death in January 1976 and the rise in China of the Maoist fundamentalists led by Jiang Qing in April that allowed the full fever of Maoism to explode in Cambodia.[35] Ponchaud concluded, "The Chinese revolutionary principles embodied in the writings of Mao Zedong have been taken over and pushed as far as they would go . . . ."[36]

Pol Pot saw his argument with Zhou Enlai as a debate about speed and stages. He rejected Zhou's advice for gradualism and step-by-step advance in line with changing popular consciousness and material conditions. Pol Pot would reach communism in one great leap. As Sihanouk heard it from the Cambodian Communists, "We want to . . . reach total communism with one leap forward. So we have to be more extremist than Madame Mao Zedong and the Cultural Revolution leadership in China. We want to be known as the only communist party to communize a country without a step by step policy, without going through socialism."[37]

34. Francois Ponchaud, *Cambodia Year Zero*, (New York: Penguin Books, 1978 [1977]), pp. 37, 108, 115, 129, 131, 113, 116, 141-142, 151, 160. For an explication of Pol Pot's Marxist-Maoist world view, see Kenneth Quinn, "Cambodian Secret Police," in Jonathan R. Adelman, ed., *Terror and Communist Politics* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1984), pp. 195-232.

35. Jakarta radio, April 17, 1985 in JPRS-SEA-85-075 (May 8, 1985 Indonesia), p. 4.

36. *Op. cit.*, p. 164.

37. " 'The Lesser Evil' An Interview with Norodom Sihanouk," *The New York Review*, March 14, 1985, p. 24. Mao is said to have congratulated the Combodian Communists for their policies, declaring, "You have won a remarkable victory . . . . One blow — and there are no more classes." (Cited by R.M. Aslanov and B.A. Balotin, "The Failure of Maoism in East and Southeast Asian," *Problemy Dal' Nego Vostoka*, No. 4 (1980), translated in *JPRS* 77, 729, p. 83). In addition, Che, anc Fidel in his Maoist period, shared a similar set of predilections. Fidel told me he had wrongly taken Marx's "Critique of the Gotha Program" too seriously. Che would eradicate as vigorously as possible "economism" and all the categories involved with capitalist relations, money, market, value and material incentives. Fidel contrasted the rich metropolis with the impoverished countryside and ordered teachers to live with peasants and "learn the 'why' of the Revolution . . . how our peasants have lived deprived of everything." Supposedly voluntary but definitely unpaid labor was meant to develop among urban people a so-called socialist ethos of love for labor. "We did not make a Revolution here to establish the right to trade," Fidel declared, explaining why it was not crazy to collectivize even the fruit stands, barbershop and the like. To the ambitious and individualistic Fidel, "The communist man cannot be developed by encouraging man's ambition, man's individualism, man's individual desires." (See the essay by José Moreno in *Revolutionary Change in Cuba*, in Carmelo Mesa-Lago, eds., (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1971), pp. 478 and 488. Cf. Michael Löwy, *The Marxism of Che Guevara*, (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1973).

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These Maoist policies devastated the economy and demoralized a people. They are the major causes of the malnutrition, depression, hunger and disease which caused far more death in Maoist China and Cambodia than did Stalinist purges and political killings (which also occurred in the millions in China, and less so in much smaller Cambodia). Not surprisingly, when China after Mao's death began to dismantle the cruel structures he had erected, it lifted painful and oppressive burdens off peoples' backs such that Deng Xiaoping's reformers were welcomed with exuberance by hundreds of millions of previous sufferers in China.

Nonetheless, to understand why the political struggle continues, one must remember how institutionalized is Leninist Stalinism and not forget the continuing popular sources of Maoism understood as a logical and legitimate consequence of Leninism in a third-world anti-imperialist setting. Mao worried that the cities would corrupt the pure essence of the revolution, that urban people were too well-off to be truly revolutionary. On the eve of power, Mao told his colleagues, "There is a danger in the lures we may meet. This strife between capitalism and working class [i.e., the ruling Leninist Party-EF] will be acute in the cities. If we sit on the summit of power and allow ourselves its privileges, then we may find ourselves drawn to capitalism against socialism."[38]

Such manichean oppositions heightened a feeling that the native was pure while the foreign was polluting. The revolution for Mao was symbolized by the illiterate rural boys who were virgins risking their lives, surviving the long march and being transformed by it as they shared the food of one big pot to build socialism, asking nothing materially for themselves. In contrast, the sophisticated particularisms of urban groups, of intellectuals, traders and administrators, seemed sources of privilege, corruption and parasitism. By 1960, Mao suggested, "we must disperse the residents of the big cities to the rural areas . . ."[39] In practice, such an enforced exodus began in the second half of 1957.

Sending students and officials to the countryside was supposed to stoke revolutionary élan. Mao concluded that it was "a bad thing" that his Party had conquered the cities "because it caused our Party to deteriorate."[40] Some 20 million people were forced to abandon city homes for a harsh life among rural strangers who mistrusted them.

As most vividly depicted by William Hinton, the Maoist Cultural Revolution was centrally a factional struggle within the Party against those whose revolutionary experience was in the cities ruled by the counter-revolution, the so-called "white areas."[41] To heighten this contrast of rural reds and urban whites, Zhang Chunqiao, the Chinese Maoist theorist apparently closest to

38. *Al Ahram*, February 21, 1973, translated in *FBIS*-Chi-73 458, March 7, 1973, p. 15.
39. *Mao Zedong sixiang wansui* (1967), reprinted in Japan and Hong Kong, pp. 226-227.
40. Stuart Schram, ed., *Chairman Mao Talks to the People*, (New York: Pantheon, 1974), p. 288.
41. Hinton, *Shenfan*, (New York: Random House, 1983).

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the Cambodian Communists,[42] instructed his followers not to "write about the workers' movement, student movement and youth movement in the cities. My consistent position is that we should not write about urban struggles in the white areas."[43]

Mao ordered doctors out of urban hospitals to slop hogs and wash latrines in the countryside. As if there were no germ theory of disease, Mao ordered doctors to stop wearing masks. He found that the barrier to infectious disease created a distance from the masses, symbolically displaying the doctors' fear of being polluted by the reds when it was the urban doctors who were really dirty since they lived off the exploited surplus of the rural poor. Mao ordered doctors to "go into the countryside" except for "a few of the less able doctors who graduated one or two years ago" who could be "left behind in the city."[44] Chinese health care declined precipitously.

In practice, military hospitals were exempt from this decree. Hence ruling groups kept their privileged facilities while medical care fell for the unprivileged, overwhelming majority whose nutrition and energy declined, while illness increased.[45] The same process subsequently was institutionalized in Cambodia. With ordinary medical care starved both for funds and skilled people, and with medicine run on the basis of political ties rather than specialized competence, ordinary citizens experienced themselves as the victims of boot-licking incompetents who loyally served the rulers of a corrupt state. The actual consequence of Maoism in medicine as in so many aspects of life was to make things worse, spread cynicism and delegitimate the system.

What powerless Chinese experience and confront is a corrupt medical system which treats them as second class citizens. They gossip about officials who have access to superior facilites denied to ordinary citizens. They let each other know about which floor of which hospitals seem reserved for the big shots. They spread horror stories, telling one another about a suffering Zhang San (John Doe) who needed a specialist. But the doctor's schedule was always booked because the declining Zhang San had no bribe to offer that the doctor considered good enough. People curse the second-rate personnel on whom they have to rely, such as paramedic so-and-so said, during a vasectomy, to have tied off Zhang San's wrong tubes.

Nonetheless, Maoism's reified, manichean categories of parasitic city and super-exploited countryside, as with other scapegoating notions — racism, anti-Semitism, sexism, anti-Catholicism, jingoism, etc. — can appeal to quite a following. With the peasant the pure and the urban the corrupter, youngsters from Shanghai, experienced as the metropolitan, polluting heartland of China, were often treated by country people with fierce contempt. They were

42. Guan Fengyue, "The Preposterous Theories of Zhang Chunqiao and The Cambodian Communists" (in Chinese), *Zhengming* (Hong Kong), No. 17 (March 1979), pp. 32-33.

43. Translated from *Honfqi*, No. 7 (1978), "Tampering with Party History in Order to Usurp Party and State Power," *FBIS*, July 12, 1978, p. E5.

44. Schram, *op. cit.*, pp. 232-233.

45. One popular post-Mao reform directs the military hospitals to open empty beds to all citizens on a need basis. Obviously, that does not resolve the issue of equity and justice.

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targets for curses, beatings and rape in the Maoist 1960s and 1970s. Shanghai people traveling in the countryside tried to hide their Shanghai accent and Shanghai origins. But rural people, no matter how often they were fooled in practice, believed that the Shanghai breed was easily identified by everything from the way they wore their hair to their clothes.

The Maoist language of opposition to commodity systems, wage grade structures, expertise and bourgeois rights was translated in peasant consciousness to legitimate anger against or hate for the urban, the intellectual and the fat cat bureaucrats who were all experienced at ripping-off hard-working, honest, loyal and patriotic peasants. Maoism heated up pre-existing, proto-populist, semi-fascist angers of poor, traditional, rural people who saw the army as their protector against urban wiles.

Of course, urban dwellers felt themselves being taken advantage of, too. Housing decayed. Little new urban housing was built.[46] By the end of the Mao era, urban housing space per person declined by one-third. In addition, state incitements to police vigilantism, which compelled all to rat on all, filled neighborhoods and families with mistrust, lying and emotional explosions. Parents were fearfully silent in the presence of their young children. Work lost its purpose. Party-state organs were seen as homes for opportunists and hypocrites. Young urban males who were alienated from Party, work and home sought close bonds with truly honorable friends, at times forming urban gangs.

Urban parents forced to send a child to the countryside debated whether to send a son or a daughter. If a son left, the parents would lose the person who would care for them in their elder years. If a daughter were sent, the parents worried that she would be the target of sexual assault or be forced to marry what they saw as an unwashed, uneducated, almost uncivilized peasant, experienced as a virtual race apart. A very ugly feature of historic Chinese culture, almost racist feelings toward peasants, was intensified.

In addition, Shanghai sent out skilled people to the countryside and surrendered half the value it produced to the socialist state. The result of Maoism was that Shanghai people felt violated and taken advantage of, even as rural people blamed their poverty on rich Shanghai. The poorest 20% to 40% in the countryside actually declined economically. The Leninist state talked of a peasant-proletarian alliance, but its Maoist policies accentuated the gap and intensified bad feelings and mistrust between city and countryside. The gap between rich and poor regions of China increased greatly in the Mao era as peasants were frozen in place with a pass system as in apartheid and kept from economic advance by the anti-economic irrationalities of Maoism, worsening the alienating institutions of collectivization.

Naturally, it has been able-bodied villagers in the poorest parts of China who have responded most enthusiastically to the post-Mao reforms. No longer totally bound by a pass system, able to use money and seek jobs, they

46. Cf. Ivan Szelenyi, *Urban Inequalities Under State Socialism*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1983).

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escaped the collectives and leaped ahead of the reforms. Experienced as freed from feudal bondage, such people were popularly dubbed *ziliuren,* a play on the term *ziliudi,* which is usually translated as private plot, but literally means land (di) retained (liu) for the individual (zi). That is, it is what does not belong to the state or its collective. Like one freed from serfdom, a *ziliuren* was an individual (ren) who now retained (liu) control of his or her individual (zi) destiny.

Cheap hostels, small pubs, cheap noodle shops, traveling peddlers of holiday goods, consumer items, magic shows and so much more sprung to life. People did not have to take orders from a party or state official. They could plan more of their own life. Savings grew. So did housebuilding, construction of water towers and pipes for running water. People sought everything from baby strollers to washing machines. Industry was ordered to respond to the popular demand. Having watched the spread of so many little joys from honeymoons to the ability to drink with friends, it is still difficult to realize how much inhumanity had weighed people down.

Of course, the rural economy grew at spectacular rates and the Chinese state was soon worrying how to store grain and cotton surpluses instead of worrying about earning foreign exchange to purchase these basic agricultural goods. The Maoist policy of grain first had made grain scarce, as Maoism's economic irrationality in this area brought the precise opposite of what was desired. Analysts who assume that Maoist intentions actually achieved the intended results get everything wrong.

It should not be surprising that the breeching of the feudal-like barriers of the Mao era unleashed a tremendous amount of productive energies. To give but one specific example from a village in which I have been doing research, the collective fruit orchard was put up for lease by competitive bidding. Twenty groups of three or more households bid. The bidding started at a price higher than the value of total sales the prior year. I worried that no one would make a profit. Instead the orchard tripled its earnings. What was revealed was that for the prior quarter of a century, villagers were so alienated from the collective economy that they would not suggest or make useful innovations whose worth was obvious to everyone. As soon as the orchard was in the hands of the self-managing co-op, the members pruned trees to increase production and create space and light to grow vine crops and sunflowers. They made sunflower oil and sold it.

The real increase in efficiency and productivity in the rural economy came not only from freeing up individual initiative and welcoming the return of the market but by the growth of the tertiary economy, the development of transport, repairs, warehousing, parts, information and the like. The economy, as life itself, began to bubble with excitement. According to official statistics, the poorest 20%, some 160 million people who lived below 40 yuan per person a year, $20.00 at today's exchange rate, was cut by two-thirds.

Once one sees how much key parts of Maoism built on central elements of Stalinism and was, in addition, headed in the direction on which Pol Pot went

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yet further, then it is not difficult to understand why the Chinese reforms are both liberating and popular. What must be explained therefore is why such a successful reform program continues to confront formidable opposition, why the most liberating and democratic efforts have been so easily thwarted and why, even now, a full institutionalization of the reform policies remains far from achieved. Indeed, many Chinese still believe it could all be reversed should Den Xiaoping disappear.

The institutional apex of conservative, neo-Stalinist opposition to the reforms are the senior military leaders. Den Xiaoping has given them a posh retirement, building the best quality apartment suites for them, allowing them to keep a car and chauffeur, permitting them continuing access to classified documents and finding "cushy" jobs for their children. Are they then genuinely retired or connected to continuing loyal networks of power and biding their time while waiting in the wings? They have a vision of themselves as protectors of the poorest of the poor, defenders of the nation, the real embodiment of what China's socialist revolution was all about. They see themselves as having recruited the most wretched rural dwellers and having served their interests, as having fought to a standoff both the Americans and the Soviets and their clients.

The military, as an institution, as the savior of the nation, was the most privileged in China. Indicatively, their children at school during the great leap famine, Chinese say, uniquely received specially nutritious food. Quite naturally, the reform movement and its literary champions quickly exposed this corrupt privilege in the post-Mao era of democratization. Deng Xiaoping, however, even more quickly conceded to the complaints of the military and their traditionalist allies in Party and administration that such exposes be stopped and their authors criticized and silenced.[47] In 1979, 1981, 1983 and again in 1985, the traditionalists have blunted the dynamism of reform efforts and seized the inititative for their side.

These traditionalists, in addition, have lots of support in cities. While urban dwellers do not desire a return to Mao's violent fundamentalism, they are not happy with the reforms which benefit rural dwellers. They see themselves as the losers in those reforms. And focusing not on the poor in the hinterlands but on the new type peasants who live in metropolitan suburbs and have big private houses, motorcycles, fresh vegetables and a family member on a state payroll, such urban dwellers feel the reforms benefiting country people already have gone too far, bringing with them too much inflation. Nonetheless, the reformers continue to shift funds and efforts to fundamentally change the economic conditions of the rural poorest.

Yet even some of those poor do not side with the reformers. The poor in previous guerrilla base areas once benefited from special subsidies and children rising through the military on to state payrolls. All that special access has ended. In general, in the countryside, most people over 55 mistrust the reforms and would happily back a reversal of policy. Traditions, patriarchy,

47. *Zhengming*, March 1985, pp. 34-38, translated in JPRS-CPS-85-054, June 5, 1985.

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army and revolutionary history all seem to join to create powerful and legitimate opposition to the reformers.

Little outside attention has been paid to the leader of the traditionalists, Chen Yun. Chen has risen as the previous leader of that group, Ye Jianying, the senior military figure, has sunk toward death.

Ye Jianying had great prestige among senior military and political officials for having saved the nation from catastrophes launched by fundamentalists identifying with the words of Mao Zedong. In early 1967 Marshall Ye helped persuade Mao not to allow his followers to carry their chaos into the Chinese military, thus launching an effort which eventually halted cultural revolution violence. In 1972 Ye, as the senior marshall, investigated the military to discover who had joined in Lin Biao's plot against Mao and Prime Minister Zhou Enlai. He ferretted out the culprits without a witch hunt in the military. By 1976 Marshall Ye was a most respected and trusted figure to whom other leaders appealed in preparing the arrest of Jiang Qing and her Shanghai allies in the wake of Mao's death, thereby finally ending the Maoist irrationality which led to the great leap and its famine. Thus Marshall Ye and the conservative groups who came to see him as their leader believed he was the one most responsible for saving China from civil war and destructive chaos.

As Marshall Ye's health has declined, Chen Yun, the head of the Party's Discipline Commission, became the unanointed leader of the conservatives. Chen Yun added to the sacred aura surrounding Marshall Ye's China-saving activities an enormous prestige of his own.

First, Chen Yun was clean. In contrast, members of Marshall Ye's family were notorious items of high level gossip in China for alleged extraordinary matters of corruption, much like Brezhnev's cronies. Second, legitimacy these days cannot avoid the economic question. Chen Yun, as Minister of Commerce, was credited earlier for having devised some of the policies that checked China's income-ruining, run-away inflation at the founding of the People's Republic of China. More important, in 1956, at the Eighth Party Congress, Minister Chen spoke most forcefully against continuing Mao's anti-market policies and against expanding the large, levelling collectives which Mao supported. When Mao in 1958 instead expanded this economic irrationality and launched the Great Leap Forward which brought famine unto death to many millions of Chinese, Chen Yun stood silent. While all other leaders joined the hurrahs and huzzahs for Mao's supposed creative wisdom, Minister Chen said nothing. That silence is seen by other leaders as a special mark of both wisdom and courage. It also gives us a feeling for the fear and fawning which shape politics in a Leninist state.

Chen Yun emerged in the post-Mao years as a leader of unique prestige. Den Xiaoping concedes to Chen Yun on numerous issues. Chen's views helped shape the 1981 Resolution on Party History which treated the years before Mao's deadly Great Leap as a golden age of correct policies. But those were the years when China borrowed and emplanted Soviet Stalinist institutions, what Chen refers to as a planned economy, the traditional economy of

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socialism. He has associated himself with a policy of positive rapprochement with the Soviet Union seen as another planned economy like China.

Planning is a popular catch-word as law and order in the United States can be a code word for racists for toughness toward minorities. There is a popular anger in China over crime, corruption and the felt chaos which can easily be blamed on the foreign, modern world, instead of the party-state system. The conservatives have made preserving order and morality against such polluting inroads their policies. Deng Xiaoping has felt compelled to join them and not to allow the conservatives to make those popular issues their own.

Chen Yun thus seems to many senior military, administrative, Party and security officials throughout China's socialist state their best hope, someone who represents their interests because he will maintain the institutional framework which just happens also to make them legitimately the specially powerful people they are. Minister Chen seems to be the one who will guarantee that modernization will bring prosperity without what the traditionalists see as pollution, capitalism, unfairness, injustice, indignity or chaos.

To these traditionalists, the democratic reforms of 1978-1979 threatened to smear the good name of the Party and the socialism it stands for. To these traditionalists, the out-of-control electoral campaigns and unofficially published journals of 1980-81 again threatened socialism, Marxism-Leninism, the party and the state structure. To these traditionalists, the reformers' opening to the outside world had by 1983 brought crime, juvenile delinquency, loss of faith, undermining of the family and, worst of all, a popular belief that socialism, Marxism-Leninism, the Party and the state structure had caused all these. In each case, China's paramount leader, Deng Xiaoping, cracked down, cancelling the democracy wall movement, jailing publishers of unofficial journals and launching a campaign against cultural pollution. The traditionalists believe that it is they and their leaders, Marshall Ye and Minister Chen, who brought Deng to his senses and checked the dangerous innovations of the reformers. They do not trust the upstarts around Deng.

The issue is often fought out on the basis of conserving or reforming the policies and institutions in place before Mao initiated his great leap policies in 1958 with their slighting of the knowledge of science, economics and the experienced interests of farmers. Both traditionalists and reformers agree that those anti-economic fundamentalist policies of Mao brought a catastrophe to China.

Since China was mainly applying a Soviet model of economic development in that "golden age", the debate inevitably touches the issue of Beijing-Moscow relations. It is the Chen Yun positions that traditional Soviet institutions as adjusted to and applied in China (concern for peasant livelihood, more use of the market, no secret police terror, making use of the talents of all sectors of the population) were good and need not be reformed now.

An extended citation from a speech to Party leaders by Deng Liqun, one of the most powerful Party conservatives, can give a feel for their views on the party, socialism and patriarchy, democracy, youth and chaos. The issue of

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chaos, Deng Liqun explained, was brought out earlier by Comrade Chen Yun. "Comrade Xiaoping agreed with Comrade Chen Yun's choice of words, feeling that that kind of people were currently using methods of the 'Cultural Revolution' to create disturbances and cause trouble. Some people were even calling for the second 'Cultural Revolution.' Here I want to explain a little. After the Democratic Wall was stopped, so called secret publications appeared in many places. Last summer the bad heads of the publications banded together to form the National Federation of People's Publications, and branches were set up in many areas. A small minority of the bad heads of these illegal publications had already been shown to be in direct collusion with Hong Kong Trotskyists, were supported by Hong Kong Trotskyists, listened to their ideas, and even received a little financial aid from them. The majority of Trotskyists in this country who had been released from prison were not active, but there were individuals who were mixed up with them. In Tianjin city there was a through and through opposition party and an anti-Socialist who said that he did not currently show himself but that he gave them advice. Last year we had base level direct elections. Some colleges in Beijing were running elections and the bad heads of these illegal publications were extremely active stirring up trouble, recklessly attacking the Party, and recklessly attacking socialism. This should not be underrated. Because youth have no experience in government they do not know the advantages and disadvantages, nor do they know their true colors. Some youth were taken in by them and gathered together with them to create disturbances. This also exposed loopholes in our laws and legal system itself. For example, the election laws have no provisions for this: . . . anyone can go to a school or other platform and make campaign speeches. Originally it was that one school elected those from its own school, but a few schools can get together. During that more than a month some schools were enveloped in a rather foul atmosphere. There were not many people involved, but youth are unknowing and love to listen to that kind of impassioned, trouble-making talk."[48]

It has been Deng Xiaoping's strategy to concede most issues to the traditionalists as long as he can win on personnel reform and continuing the economic reforms. These two successes, Deng believes, will leave China with reformers in power and a citizenry supporting the reforms, that is, an irreversible process.

Yet Deng has not been able to win on all key personnel issues. For example, for First Party Secretary of Hunan Province is still Mao Zhiyong (known to the reformers, in a parody of the local dialect, as Meiyouyong, meaning useless). When Li Rui, the Deputy Director of the Party Organization Bureau, tried to publicly expose how Hunan's Mao and his Party machine continued old-fashioned anti-economic, anti-ecological policies, Mao appealed to conservative leader Chen Yun and Chen had Li Rui retired. While the reformers continue to publicly criticize Hunan's Mao for tyranny (e.g., seizing land by

48. *Speeches on Party History by Deng Liqun*, August 1981 in JPRS-CPS-85-030, March 28, 1985, p. 18.

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military means and pushing the farmers off the land) and even finally replaced the conservative ally of Chen Yun who was First Party Secretary of Shanghai who had been resisting the reforms, nonetheless, the conservatives have, on personnel matters, given as good as they have taken. The struggle continues.

One matter that weighs against the reformers is that their wisdom seems heresy in the Leninist tradition. Therefore the reformers cannot readily legitimate their policies. They want to say that, if Marx had it right when, in *The Poverty of Philosophy,* he found that "The hand mill gives you society with the feudal lord; the steam mill, society with the industrial capitalist," then maybe it was the age of steel that made for the Stalin model and that that no longer makes sense in the world of today's post big steel new technologies. But what then does one call the new age if one is stuck with simple notions of capitalism, socialism, communism? How does one escape being branded a convergence theorist, as the Stalinists indeed call them, one who believes in the power of technology rather than revolutionary classes?

If the reformers correctly insist that science (better seeds, fertilizer, irrigation, invention, automation, etc.) increases productivity and wealth, where does that leave Marx's labor theory of value, the special role of an urban industrial proletariat, and, most importantly, the Party which claims to embody the interests of that universal class, the proletariat, the Party which claims to embody the science of Marxism, thus legitimating Party power?

This list can be extended.[49] Deng Xiaoping insists that an open door to trade and technology is an imperative of progress. Where does that leave Lenin on imperialism? Chinese students know it negates that outdated view. Capitalism is vibrant seven decades after Lenin sounded its death knoll. So students mock sleep when compelled to hear such silly lectures as Lenin on imperialism.

With so much rapid change and so many issues debated and undecided, ruling groups in China continue to struggle over the direction of the post-Mao reforms. Thus, a number of possibilities remain open to China in the not distant future. Indeed, nothing seems decided. The stalemate could continue. The conservatives could seize the initiative. The economic reformers might win a total victory. There really is an extraordinarily wide-open political struggle on-going in China.

49. Take the issue of the peasant as the petty-bourgeois enemy of socialism, a notion common to Marx, Lenin and Stalin, which Mao's fundamentalism used to legitimate his war on all private efforts. Deng declared in June 1981, "What should be criticized here is . . . the misunderstanding, dogmatic interpretation and erroneous application of Lenin's statement that small production engenders capitalism and the bourgeoisie daily, hourly, and on mass scale." *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping (1975-1982)*, (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1984), p. 296. Well, what then are these petty, private producers and sellers of commodities? Deng Liqun says that since collectivization, they have become "collective peasants" (*op. cit.*, p. 38). But China has decollectivized its agriculture and opened the rural market. The issue is not solved by treating peasants, as all others in a socialist China, as socialist laborers, which seems to be the present compromise. The point is that to follow Marx and Lenin is to go on the painful path of Stalin and Mao. To do what is decent and productive delegitimates the ruling Leninist Party. Therefore, one must ask, "What Is To Be Done?"

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There is one more possibility that is seldom discussed publicly in the present political atmosphere of stalemate and conservative propaganda themes but which gives an idea of how much is at stake. There is a group of powerful democrats within the Deng Xiaoping reform group who consider themselves Marxists, that is, not Leninists. They would like to see rural co-ops join together and run candidates for local office. They would like to see genuine political democracy begin at local levels, genuine liberty begin in the cultural sphere. They would like to create groups and institutions then which have an interest and dynamism in pressing fully toward a democratization of a non-capitalist state. They are well aware of the history of Czechoslovakia in 1967 and 1968.

Deng Xiaoping has agreed to silence or isolate high spokesmen of the democratic reformers especially when such people have been willing to blame the Party for bringing China its disasters, corruption and cynicism. Perhaps Deng is wise and right and to push further now would only produce a backlash.

Nonetheless, these Party democrats continue to act. They do not blame the weather, foreign polluters and youthful ignorance for China's problems. They accuse the ruling Party itself. One of their spokesmen, Liu Binyan[50] has recently been silenced. But another who had been silenced, Wang Ruoshui, has been permitted to write a bit again. Without forgetting the overwhelming odds against this democratic wing of the reform grouping, given the strength of the conservatives, the fears of the citizenry and the absolute economic priorities of most reformers, certainly Deng Xiaoping, still Wang's thinking remains most popular with urban youth. "[T]he practice of socialism gives rise to the question of alienation . . . . The people should be compared to a mother. [Party, government and leaders are sons produced by this mother.] . . . [M]other . . . loved and pampered her son . . . . But when the son grew up, he became an unfilial good for nothing. He not only refused to listen to his mother, but even bullied and tyrannized her and even maltreated her. The son . . . [took] her as an outsider or an enemy. The mother also realized that her son . . . had become an alien element in the family . . . . A thing originally of our own creation has developed and become an alien force which has gone out of control and turned round to dominate and oppress . . . . [Economic e]xploitation is . . . not the only kind of alienation . . . . Going after high speed and heavy industry by sacrificing the people's living standards, developing heavy industry for its own sake . . . will bring suffering to the people since the harder they work the greater is their suffering . . . . This, too, is alienation . . . . Where does the main danger come from? Is it possible that the main danger still comes from servants of the people transforming themselves into lords of the people? . . . This may be compared to a mother who toiled to raise a son, expecting him to look after her when he grew up. But when the son grew up, he turned against her and acted unfilially. When a

50. Perry Link, ed., *Liu Binyan: People or Monsters*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983).

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government becomes a lord out of control of the people, it becomes an alien force. That is alienation, political alienation. [I]t is now absolutely necessary to raise the slogan 'socialist humanism' . . . . During the 10 years of turmoil [1966-1967-EF], brutal acts in violation of humanism were commonplace and they were given the good name of 'revolutionary acts'. Facts have demonstrated that the effects and danger of anti-humanistic 'leftist' ideas are even greater than those of bourgeois humanism . . . . [A] strong person . . . will overcome pain . . . England's Ruskin said, 'A young girl can sing for her lost love . . . .' "[51]

Nonetheless, in 1985 the initiative was not in the hands of the reformers, let alone their democratic faction. The western press coverage of China's September Party Congress which interpreted the promotion of younger people and the retirement of older people as a victory for the reformers was misleading. Even conservatives age and retire. Chinese journals in Hong Kong did not see the rapid promotion of Li Peng — who had been raised by Zhou Enlai — eventually perhaps to become Prime Minister as a victory for the reformers. The Chinese journals focused on Li's technical education in the Soviet Union and his ties to the children of other leaders such as Chen Yun. This combination was said to make Li and his friends absolutely opposed to the economic irrationalities of Maoism but also strongly committed to a rationalized Soviet-style so-called planned economy and vanguard government, leaving little room for the emergence of genuine pluralism based on the self-representation of social forces. Centralization and political education were the legitimate themes of 1985 whereas the reformers inveigh against over-centralization and argue for delegating power and liberating the mind, code words which mean negating the Stalinist politico-economic system.[52] The point, however, is not that Chen Yun and the conservatives have won but that their entrenched power in the post-Mao era puts grave limits on the reformers and guarantees a continuation of a fierce struggle at the apex of state power.

51. Wang Ruoshui, "On Alienation" (translated as estrangement by the Chinese) *Selected Writings on Studies of Marxism*, No. 12, 1981, (Beijing: Chinese Academy of Social Sciences); Wang Ruoshui, "On 'Revolutionary Humanism,' " *Gongren ribao* (Workers Daily), Beijing, June 21, 1985, translated in FBIS, China, June 24, 1985, pp. K1 to K3; Wang Ruoshui, "The Pain of Wisdom," *Ching Pao* (The Mirror), Hong Kong, May 1985 (manuscript of January 7, 1984), translated in JPRS-CPS-85-083 August 16, 1985, pp. 147-151. Deng Pufang, the son of Deng XiZoping who was permanently crippled by the terroristic violence of the Cultural Revolution and who now actively helps lead welfare activities for the handicapped seems a strong proponent of socialist humanism. ("Ours is a Humanitarian Cause — On an Interview with Deng Pufang, Vice President of the China Welfare Fund for the Handicapped," *Liaowang*, March 11, 1985, translated in JPRS-CPS-85-039 April 26, 1985, pp. 36-41.)

52. Reformers argue "Although Lenin saw, in his later years, the malpractice of bureaucratism, the lack of democracy inside the Party and the growth of personal power resulting from the emphasis on centralism, and wanted to adopt measures to expand democracy inside the Party, the Russians failed to set up a complete and perfect system to expand democracy within the Party for various reasons." (Ni Yongping, "The Principles of Organization of the First International and Lenin's Democratic Centralism," *Guangming ribao*, March 18, 1985, translated in JPRS-CPS-85-039, April 26, 1985, p. 45. Whereas the democratic reformers argue for a democratized version of Lenin, the conservatives stand with Leninist-Stalinist political institutions.

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BLACK URBAN ADMINISTRATIONS

By Adolph Reed, Jr.

The elections of Harold Washington and Wilson Goode, along with the near election of Mel King, have generated new speculations about black urban adminstrations. The tacit assumptions here concern the significance of these administrations for racial democracy in the U.S. The fact that a black or Hispanic candidate is elected mayor is taken as evidence of "progress." Presumably, if an electorate selects a candidate, that candidate must have been able to transcend previously insurmountable boundaries to galvanize a winning coalition. This view, of course, does not account for the fact that blacks tend overwhelmingly — unless black candidates are woefully pock-marked politically — to vote black and whites are just as likely to vote white. A more sophisticated interpretation sees the rise of black administrations as the current stage of an unfolding pattern of urban ethnic succession, according to which the capture of city hall reflects a group's primacy in the city.[1] From this vantage point black administrations represent — if not the realization of grand democratic ideals — at least a reassurance that the modified Hobbesean democracy of "street-fighting" pluralism now works even for blacks.

In either case the black administration is depicted as having not extraordinary significance and it is identified with political values transcending the mundane arena of local public policy. Black urban management, however, should be analyzed in terms of the structural dynamics that have created the conditions for its rise. Such an analyses will reveal what real options are open to black administrations in relation to those of the local regimes they replace. Although inidividual perspicacity and organizational talent seem the most pertinent factors determining election of a given regime, it is difficult to believe that urban political wisdom came to the black community only in the late 1960s. Black control of city governance must thus be analyzed as the result of a particular set of demographic, socio-economic and ideological conditions.

Demographic Pressure

Throughout the two decades after WW II the non-white share of big city populations rose steadily because of: 1) absolute increase of non-whites, largely by immigration; 2) relative, and sometimes absolute white decrease, mainly by emigration; and 3) comparative fixity of municipal boundaries.[2]

1. See, for example, Peter Eisinger's discussion in *The Politics of Displacement: Racial and Ethnic Transition in Three American Cities* (N.Y., 1980).

2. On the migration issue, see Charles Tilly, "Race and Migration to the American City" in

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New migrants, largely black and hispanic, flocked to the nation's major cities in quest of a better way of life. At the same time, spurred by Federal housing policies that subsidized single-family, low-density housing, middle class and stable working class whites began re-locating to suburban areas. Consequently, by the latter 1960s, black majority cities became a national issue.[3]

While the factors drawing non-whites to the central city are familiar, those nudging whites out are more complex. White urban exodus has been a response first of all to the ideology of upward mobility, buttressed by Federal transportation and housing policies that stimulates suburban development after WW II.[4] Leaving the old in-city enclaves for modern, disconnected tract houses has been a symbol of arrival. This has been helped considerably by the mortgage subsidies provided by Federal programs which brought the relatively new "American dream" of home ownership within reach of a substantial portion of the population who would not otherwise have been able to afford it. Moreover, white departure has been stimulated by non-white immigration, for reasons that are at least partly rational. Fear of loss of property value has a factual basis. property values tend to fall when blacks enter a neighborhood simply because one element of property value is white exclusivity.[5] This generates a tragic cycle. Whites flee with black encroachment. Real estate values fall, accelerating flight. As values fall, housing stock begins to deteriorate, prompting stable and middle income blacks to follow fleeing whites, whose new neighborhoods lose their relative attractiveness once blacks move in, and so on.

This game of leap-frog has obvious revenue implications for municipalities. Suburban sprawl has meant relative and in some cases absolute reductions in municipal tax bases. Moreover, as is well known, the city finds itself in the position of providing daily sevices to hordes of suburban freeloaders. A simple solution would be aggressive annexation. For a number of reasons however, such a response is impractical. Given racial voting patterns, elected officials in black majority cities are loath to annex pockets of potentially antagonistic white voters. In any event, the latter can expect sufficient support in state legislatures to ward off any unilateral annexations.

But racial antagonism has not been the only obstacle to the expansion of post-war cities. In most cases, central city size has been constant since the 1920s. In some instances expansion has not occurred because cities had either already absorbed all surrounding unincorporated areas or had become cotermi-

James Q. Wilson, ed., 2The Metropolitan Enigma (N.Y., 1968), pp. 144-169; Robert Lineberry & Ira Sharkansky, *Urban Politics & Public Policy* (N.Y., 1979), pp. 46-62; Katharine L. Bradbury, Anthony Downs & Kenneth A. Small, *Urban Decline and the Future of American Cities* (Washington, D.C., 1982), pp. 133-8.

3. The proliferation of "urban crisis" literature began in the mid-1960s. The *Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders* brought the issue of racial transition to widespread public attention by 1968.

4. Patrick J. Ashton, "The Political Economy of Suburban Development" in William K. Tabb & Larry Sawers, eds., *Marxism and the Metropolis* (N.Y., 1978); pp. 73-4.

5. This ironic relation is discussed in Anthony Downs, *Neighborhoods and Urban Development* (Washington, D.C., 1981), pp. 50ff.

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nous with other "natural" political boundaries, e.g., counties. However, that is not universally true, and even if it were, such obstacles could be overcome; Georgia, for example, dissolved counties early in the century to accommodate Atlanta's growth and in recent years has abolished the charter of a town in the Atlanta metropolitan area.

The point remains that annexations ended rather abruptly in the post-WW I period while suburbanization has proceeded throughout the intervening years.[6] Clearly, the concerns of black elected officials have not been the only source of resistance to annexation. Another circumstance limiting municipal expansion has been the changing economic function.

Socio-economic Pressure

The modern American city has its roots in the logic of industrial production. Urban growth and industrial growth coincided between the last quarter of the 19th century and first quarter of the 20th. By the 1920s, however, new production technologies increasingly required plants to be laid out over wider parcels of land. This favored location in suburban rings where land costs were lower than in central cities. A corollary movement toward decentralization of corporate operations began around that time and also made cheaper, suburban land more attractive. Therefore, residential suburbanization has been accompanied by a suburbanization of employment opportunity.[7]

Among the various reasons that sprawling suburban areas have not been swallowed by central cities is that powerful economic interests oppose incorporation into the city's tax base at the same time that they benefit from identification with the city.[8] In this way, metropolitanization of industry coupled with residential suburbanization had been undermining the vitality of central cities by gutting the tax rolls without diminishing the consumption of municipally provided services.

Beginning in the 1960s, however, the central city developed signs of a yet more rapid deterioration and loss of function as deindustrialization began — a product of conscious management and investment policies.[9] Suffice to say that for U.S. based corporations the domestic economy has become progressively less attractive as a target for industrial capital.[10] Not only does investment in industrial production increasingly leave the U.S. altogether, in favor of more congenial climes where wage-scales are substantially lower,

6. David M Gordon, "Capitalist Development and the History of American Cities" in Tabb & Sawers, *op. cit.*, pp. 52-3. This obviously does not apply to newer sunbelt cities where annexation remains a principal form of urban growth. Cf. Bradbury, et. al., *op. cit.*, pp. 29f. Houston is probably the most dramatic case in point.

7. John F. Kain, "The Distribution and Movement of Jobs and Industry" in Wilson, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-43 and John Mollenkopf, "The Postwar Politics of Urban Development" in Tabb & Sawers, *op. cit.*, pp. 129f.

8. Ashton, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

9. The source of this phenomenon and its impact on cities are examined in considerable detail in Barry Bluestone and Bennett Harrison, *The Deindustrialization of America* (New York, 1981), esp. chapter 4 & 5.

10. See also Samuel Bowles, David Gordon & Thomas Weisskopf, *Beyond the Wasteland* (New York, 1982).

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those industries that remain are likely to prefer decentralized, exurban locations where labor and social costs are lower than in urban areas.

These demographic and economic tendencies produced by the 1960s increasingly black central cities offering rapidly declining opportunities for the kind of labor-intensive employment that had absorbed earlier waves of urban immigrants. The growth of a typically black, dispossessed urban population was steady over the decade after WW II, but in most cases it did not attract attention, as Piven and Cloward note, until the appearance of "defiant" black political activity in the 1960s.[11]

While the central city's non-white population was growing and becoming ever more economically marginalized, local government was also changing. Sheer growth in municipal size and complexity over the years had led to expansion of government functions, and the consequent increase in the public sector workforce had made government a significant source of urban employment.[12] Of course, proceeding deindustrialization intensified the government's importance as a local employer. Furthermore, the expansion of public functions was accompanied by ideological and political developments that were to channel the system's responses to black assertiveness.

Ideological Political Pressures

With growing public function came greater concern with rationality in public management. Managerial professionalism had been a feature of urban politics since the Progressive era. By the 1960s public managers had become a significant local interest group inasmuch as they have operated consistently as advocates of technical interests in local policy-making and have been able to enforce those interests, largely through appeal to general norms or "national standards" codified by their own professional associations. Moreover, growth in public employment led naturally to unionization, which enabled non-managerial public employees to press claims in the local decision-making apparatus. The municipal political system had become a microcosmic representation of the "growth coalition" that dominated national policy-making in the post-war era. Corporate, union and professional administrative interests combined as local government assumed responsibilities for stimulating economic growth and maintaining a supportive governing coalition.[13] Other groups' interests typically have been addressed to the extent that they have been formidable in terms consistent with growth priorities, and to the extent that the groups have been critical components of an electoral coalition and/or have demonstrated capability and willingness to disrupt "normal" patterns of governance. Black unrest in the 1960s forced inclusion of some black interests into the distributive calculus of pluralist growth politics.

11. Frances Fox Piven & Richard Cloward, *The Politics of Turmoil* (N.Y., 1974), pp. 314ff.

12. *Ibid.*, Also see Martin Carnoy, Derek Shearer and Russell Rumberger, *A New Social Contract* (N.Y., 1983), pp. 122f. and John Mollenkopf, "The Crisis of the Public Sector in America's Cities" in Roger Alcaly & David Mermelstein, eds., *The Fiscal Crisis of American Cities* (N.Y., 1977), pp. 113-31.

13. Mollenkopf, "Postwar Politics," *op. cit.*, pp. 134f. Also see Alan Wolfe, *America's Impasse* (Boston, 1982).

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An initial response to this unrest brought increases in public welfare spending and palliative programs. However, most of those increases went to "organized provider groups."[14] This outcome suggests that the effective response entailed less an adjustment of the logic of allocation than an expansion of the social-managerial sector to allow for participation of minority functionaries.[15] Not only was this a typical approach in growth politics — enlarging the pie as an alternative to redistribution — but it also was consonant with the inherent expansionist tendencies of bureaucracies. Moreover, this approach reinforced the growing Federal role in local government.[16]

At the same time a different ideological dynamic unfolded. Peterson notes that municipal government, because of its commitment to economic growth and revenue enhancement, naturally tends to re-formulate potentially redistributive demands so that they articulate symbolic rather than redistributive goals. In this context, official black representation in decision-making functioned as an alternative to alteration of entrenched patterns of resource allocation.[17] So pressures both toward managing conflict by increasing public spending *and* enhancing relative revenue potential converged around translation of black activism into consolidation of a black functionary substratum.

Once defiance was channeled into manageable avenues, black political activity was integrated into the urban pluralistic framework, and the familiar numbers game of ethnic politics simply took its natural course. The increasing black population in one city after another approached the critical mass that made it possible to "take City Hall."[18] Moreover, as this occurred during the period of most intense racial unrest in those cities, entrenched national and local elites readily assisted in smoothing the process of "ethnoracial transition."[19] That assistance took the general form of supporting programmatic extension of resources to buttress manageable definitions of appropriate black political activity. Specific support often was more direct and immediately meaningful, as in the Ford Foundation's underwriting of a CORE voter registration project that enabled Stokes to win the Cleveland mayoralty on his second attempt.[20]

As I have argued elsewhere,[21] the interests of a growing profesional-managerial stratum within the black community dovetailed with those of pro-growth white elites to feed Afro-American politics into a integrated pluralism

14. Piven and Cloward, *op. cit.*, p. 315. Also see their discussion of the National Welfare Rights Organization in *Poor People's Movements* (N.Y., 1977), pp. 264-361.
15. Adolph Reed, Jr., "Black Particularity Reconsidered," *Telos* (Spring, 1979), pp. 71-93.
16. On the growing Federal role see David B. Walker, "The New System of Intergovernmental Relations: More Fiscal Relief and More Governmental Intrusions," *Governmental Finance* 7 (Nov. 1978), pp. 17-22. Also, James Button, *Black Violence: Political Impact of the 1960s Riots* (Princeton, 1978).
17. Paul Peterson, *City Limits* (Chicago, 1981). pp. 178-81.
18. Carl Stokes, *Promises of Power* (N.Y., 1973), pp. 80f.
19. Eisinger, *op. cit.*, pp. 20-1ff.
20. Jeffrey K. Hadden, Louis H. Masotti & Victor Thiessen, "The Making of the Negro Mayors, 1967" in Leonard Ruchelmen, ed. *Big City Mayors: The Crisis in Urban Politics* (Bloomington, 1969), p. 127.
21. Reed, "Black Particularity," *op. cit.*, pp. 87-90.

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whose payoffs for most of its constituents could be only symbolic. The appearance of the black administration is the fulfilment of this convergence of interest at the local level. Black administration of municipalities has occurred within the context of growth politics, even though the transition has come after urban growth has waned. This has been seen as a natural progression from protest to mainstream political participation, which had been the real political objective all along.[22] However, there are two problems with this interpretation. First, the logic of growth politics to which the black administration adheres denies redistribution as a policy option and thereby prohibits direct confrontation of dispossession among the black urban population. Second, to the extent that the black administration, and black officialdom generally, presents itself to the community as the hegemonic repository of black political aspirations, it deligitimates other forms of political action and debate which are at least as vital to improving the lives of the people as is the pragmatic immediacy of the administration. Put another way, the black administration's loyalties are necessarily divided, and it is by no means clear — especially given the pluralism of interests within the black community — that the form of political engagement that official politics represents is most appropriate for pressing all black interests at all times. Clearly black administrations do not inherit a *tabula rasa*. The decisional and policy environment where the black administrations step in are hardly less fixed than their physical environment.[23] The main constraints they confront stem from three sources: 1) the city's changing economic base & functions; 2) fiscal/revenue limitations, and 3) competition among the administrations' constituencies.

Changing Economic Base

The black administration typically comes to power in a context of rapidly diminishing private sector employment opportunities for in-city residents. Private economic activity continues to prefer suburban areas at the expense of anchoring municipalities.[24] Indeed, job loss is not only to the suburbs. Increasingly, exurban areas have become attractive production locations.

22. Robert Smith, "Black Power and the Transformation from Protest to Politics," *Political Science Quarterly* 96 (Fall, 1981), pp. 431-443 and two articles by Martin Kilson: "The New Black Political Class" in Joseph Washington, ed., *Dilemmas of the Black Middle Class* (Philadelphia, 1980) and "Political Change in the Negro Ghetto, 1900-1940s" in Nathan Huggins, Martin Kilson and Daniel Fox, eds., *Key Issues in the Afro-American Experience*, (N.Y., 1971) vol. II, pp. 167-192.

23. It is helpful here to distinguish between empowerment of a black mayor and a black administration. The former refers to those instances in which a mayor assumes office in a jurisdiction that is less than 40% or so black. (In most such cases — given the tendency of white resistance to stiffen as blacks extend beyond 20-25% of the population — the black percentage of the electorate will be sustantially less than 40%.) In this setting the composition and thrust of the administration will reflect the diversity of the electoral coalition and will be carefully multi-ethnic and not racially identified. A case of this type is the Bradley administration in Los Angeles. By contrast, where the black administration assumes office in a context in which blacks comprise a substantial majority of the electoral coalition; in such cases — as, for example, in Newark or Washington — the regime is clearly identified racially. The focus of this paper is exclusively on black administrations.

24. George Sternlieb and James W. Hughes, "Metropolitan Decline and Inter-Regional Job Shifts" in Alcaly and Mermelstein, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

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Sternlieb and Hughes, after noting that through the 1970s nonmetropolitan areas grew at a faster rate than metropolitan areas, observe that manufacturing firms — long the staple of the urban laborforce — now prefer to locate in the rural South. And this preference also exhibits a racial dimension as manufacturers seek the upcountry, "white South" where workers are more docile (blacks being less anti-union) and where problems of managing racial tension do not exist.[25] Not surprisingly, then, even Sunbelt cities are beset by decline. In a ranking of cities and metropolitan areas compiled by Bradbury et al., the stagnant cities category includes the following: Beaumont, Chattanooga, Columbia, Dallas, Denver, Huntsville, Macon, Nashville, New Orleans, Oklahoma City, Salt Lake City, and Columbus, (GA.); the severely declining category includes: Atlanta, Birmingham, Lousville, Norfolk, Richmond and Savannah.[26]

In addition to loss of employment opportunity in general, what jobs remain are likely to be low-paying, low-status and dead-end. The demographic patterns discussed earlier lead stable working class and middle class residents out to the suburban ring, from which point they either work within that ring or commute to paperwork industry employment in the city. In either case they may be likely to venture downtown to consume culture, and there they encounter the municipal citizenry. The new urban economy increasingly segments the city' laborforce into a relatively high-paying, high-status, technical sector and a euphemistically designated service sector characterized by low pay, few benefits and little opportunity for advancement. Because this service sector's output is tied to the specific locale of its "production" and therefore accommodates a very small market (i.e., consumers of urban culture), this component of the dual labor system cannot begin to compensate numerically — not to mention in wages and benefits — for the employment possibilities lost to deindustrialization and capital flight. Therefore, high real rates of unemployment are chronic.[27] With unemployment, of course, comes increased criminal activity, which often enough victimizes wayfarers from the other labor market. The rational response of the revenue and image conscious municipal administration is to mobilize police power to provide a *cordon sanitaire* to protect revenue-producing, upper income consumers from potentially hostile confrontation with an indigenous rabble.

The script for this scene was written when Great Britain marched into Calcutta and France sailed into Algiers, and it is replicated daily throughout the Third World. The irony here, as there, is that the black administration is without remedies.

The economic forces that have produced this situation are national and international in scope, and to that extent they are beyond the effective influence of local government. The fact of the matter is that, so long as capital is

25. *Ibid.*, pp. 147 and 157-8.
26. Bradbury, et. al., *op. cit.*, pp. 6-7.
27. For a study of the dual labor market see David M. Gordon, Richard Edwards and Michael Reich, *Segmented Work, Divided Workers* (New York, 1982), pp. 170-239.

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readily mobile in relation to labor and government, the latter are hostage to capital's actions.[28] In this context, the black administration has no levers at its disposal through which to press the interests of its main electoral constituency. The loci of pertinent decision-making are elsewhere — Congress, the White House, corporate board rooms, international currency markets, Federal Reserve Board, etc. Thus, the black administration follows the course of its predecessors and "goes with the flow" by pursuing the objective of economic growth. However, even this objective is illusory. Practically, since government has little real leverage, stimulating growth under present circumstances means making public resources available to further purposes exclusively defined by private interests.[29] The upshot of this situation is that the black administration finds itself in a contradictory positon between its electoral constituency and the governing coalition.

Fiscal & Revenue Limitations

There is little need to discuss here the fiscal issues that face the black administration. Certain structurally-embedded sources of the current fiscal straits, however, need further elaboration. Municipal spending, like government spending at all levels, increased steadily over the two decades following the mid-1950s.[30] At the local level, this pattern of increase can be attributed to three fundamental sources: 1) the natural logic of public service expansion — a corollary of the tendency of bureaucracies to expand — which indicates the proclivity of professional service-providing agencies to upgrade services provided and thereby to emphasize the agencies' importance in the organizational totality; 2) the related dynamic of pluralist budgeting which (especially in the growth politics context) integrates conflict management into fiscal planning by ensuring that all pertinent interest-groups — both in the polity and in the bureaucracy — are allocated some portion of their claims, and 3) the Federal strategy of guaranteeing social peace through budget allocations, an outcome of which was institutionalization of higher levels of service delivery, with responsibility for maintenance often reverting to the municipality.

On the other side of the coin, population and income loss combine with the relative fixity of prior expenditure commitments to present the black administration with an unpalatable choice. One option is service reduction, which affects adversely those who are unable to find alternative answers.

28. Arghiri Emmanuel, *Unequal Exchange* (New York, 1972) carefully explicates the significance of the relative mobility of capital and labor for determining the character of markets and impact on development in the international trade context. See esp., pp. 54ff.

29. Clarence Stone demonstrates how growth politics tends to surrender government sovereignty reflexively to business priorities in his *Economic Growth and Neighborhood Discontent: System Bias in the Urban Renewal Program of Atlanta* (Chapel Hill, 1976). Also see Roger Friedland, *Power and Crisis in the City: Corporations, Unions and Urban Policy* (New York, 1983) and Susan S. Fainstein, Norman I. Fainstein, et al., *Restructuring the City: The Political Economy of Urban Development* (New York, 1983).

30. For a representation of the trend among municipalities see Charles L. Schultze, Edward R. Fried, Alice M. Rivlin, Nancy Teeters and Robert D. Reischauer, "Fiscal Problems of Cities" in Alcaly and Mermelstein, *op. cit.*, pp. 192-3. The general governmental trend is represented in Walker, "New System of Intergovernmental Relations," *op. cit.*, p. 21.

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Moreover, even when only "fat" is cut, some negative employment effect will likely be felt among the administration's electoral constituents. The other option is to raise taxes, which incurs hostility from the administration's governing coalition of significant local elites. The strength of the latter is indicated by the fact that the black administration, like its predecessors, accepts without question the premise that incremental tax increases by themselves can stimulate capital flight although empirical evidence clearly disconfirms that notion.[31] The fact is that the black administration typically adopts the perspective of its elite constituents on the economic growth agenda and sells it to the black electorate. This suggests that with regard to fundamental outlook, black political management differs little from that which it replaces.

Structural Conflict and Competing Constituencies

The black administration has to account for and position itself in relation to at least three terrains of structurally based conflicts. First, there is the area of ethnic/neighborhood competition and the administration's responsibility to maintain equity of what Peterson terms the "allocational" level, i.e., in the class of policy endeavors that neither enhance nor retard economic growth and do not stimulate redistribution.[32] That is the only municipal terrain, Peterson contends, in which relatively unfettered pluralist processes operate. Indeed, as Katznelson argues, this "trench system" of ethnic and neighborhood competition for locally distributed resources is the fundamental mode of political identity and mobilization in the US.[33]The black administration is especially vulnerable in this area because from the onset it faces skepticism and hostility from white trenches which fear that governance by blacks will be also governance for blacks only. Thus, from the beginning of their compaigns black aspirants to office must constantly reassure white voters that a black candidate who needs 95% of the black vote and 5% of the white vote will spend 95% of the time trying to secure the 5% and 5% of the time campaigning for the 95%. However, the disproportionate effort spent to pacify white opposition has some basis. To the extent that the traditional organization of the growth consensus in most cities assumed blacks to occupy at best a subordinate status within the coalition, the prospect of election of a black administration entails transition to black rule. That prospect also implies the possibility of substantive readjustment of the pattern of allocation of public resources, thus triggering anxiety among white voters. Moreover, the media typically fuel those anxieties by continually remonstrating with black officials and canditates to avoid allegedly visible temptations to play racial favoritism. (The fact that whites' anxiety is itself a function of anticipated loss of their own racial favoritism is beside the point in this regard; like all safeholders of dispropor-

31. David Harvey, *Social Justice and the City* (Baltimore, 1973), pp. 60-64, Barry M. Moriarty, *Industrial Location and Community Development* (Chapel Hill, 1980), pp. 246-257; and Bluestone and Harrison, *op. cit.*, pp. 185-7.

32. Peterson, *op. cit.*, pp. 41f.

33. Ira Katznelson, *City Trenches: Urban Politics and the Patterning of Class in the United States* (New York, 1981).

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tionate privilege, they do not perceive themselves as such, and if a black candidate were to suggest otherwise, he would be in their eyes all the more fearsome.)[34] That the media are so prone to demand loyalty from black officials is instructive. The demands made by the mass media and the business community reflect an understanding of an elemental contradiction between the economic interests of growth politics and the objective interests of the mass black electorate. Concerning the issue at hand, though, the black administration is constrained at least as much as any other, and very probably more so because of the unyielding scrutiny to which it is subject, by the pluralist injunction to maintain equity within the ethnic and neighborhood trench system.

A second arena of conflict to which the black administration must respond is more potential than actual, i.e., tension within the electoral constituency. The foundation of this tension is the divergence of interests within the black population. While the symbolic benefits that accrue to the black community from accession of the black administration might be seen as a pure collective good, the more direct, material payoffs of black political power are concentrated within certain strata of the population. Predictably, the recipients of these benefits — employment, contracts, the perquisites of influence — are the middle and upper-middle class blacks who are able to manipulate the symbols and mechanisms of authority and of political leadership to their own advantage.[35] This talent for symbolic manipulation very likely has retarded the public expression of interest differentiation to the extend that the administration claims and successfully enforces a hegemony over articulation of black interests. Suffice to say here that as black administrations increasingly assume responsibility for implementing draconian, regressive policies on the general populace in the interest of the euphemism of economic growth, more overt cleavages are very likely to develop within the black community. If so, the catalyst for their expression will be traceable to the fundamental tension within the present mode of black political activity in cities.

The baseline contradiction within black urban governance is that between the administration's electoral constituency and its governing coalition. This tension has existed in principle from the inception of growth politics. However, economic — or, more properly, budgetary — growth, the cement that held the growth coalition together, also occluded the irreducible antagonism of interests that mediated it. As soon as growth waned, the corporate and other major elite partners in the coalition began to lose patience with social expenditure as an instrument for social control. Friedland expresses the situation succinctly: "The policies necessary to growth have high social costs while

34. Cf. Eisinger, *op. cit.*, pp. 71-100. The length to which black officials might go can be seen in the case of Kenneth Gibson, hardly insecure in his electoral mandate, who nonetheless nearly went to jail in 1982 because of an obligation still being paid out of city funds to a superannuated member of the displaced ethnic regime.

35. See Peter Eisinger, "Black Employment in Municipal Jobs," *American Political Science Review* 76 (June, 1982), pp. 380-392; Sharon M. Watson, "Do Mayors Matter? The Role of Black Leadership in Urban Policy," unpublished 1980 APSA conference paper.

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the policies necessary to social control cut into the revenues necessary to support growth."[36]

Municipal administrations of all types and in all locations have had their hands called by the business partners in the growth coalition. With very few exceptions they have opted to exact the social costs necessary if city government is to continue in its role of absorbing the risk factors associated with and providing infrastructure for local economic development. Few have had the temerity to expose the lie that allowing private capital to loot the public treasury will yield public benefits down the road.

Unfortunately, black administrations have not differed from others in this regard. This is understandable because black regimes also are growth coalition regimes, many have come to power with early endorsements from Chambers of Commerce and corporate elites. Yet, these black administrations also claim a special responsibility to the needs of the black urban population. To date, the general response to the manifest condition that those two allegiances are antagonistic has been simply to refuse to acknowledge the antagonism and to carry forward the pretense that providing a social safety net for private profiteering is in the long-term interest of those already marginalized people whose needs are sacrificed to make the netting.

Conclusion

This paradoxical depiction should not be taken to imply a demand that the black administration become something that it is not. Under the heavy steering impetus of pluralist growth politics (both in the urban arena in general *and* within the black community), accession of a much different type of regime is quite difficult to envisage.[37] However, it is possible to outline certain expectations of black administrations.

First, black officials can and should be expected to maximize the options that they have within their limited context to press the interests of their rank and file black constituency. This does not mean necessarily adoption of an adversarial relation with business interests. It does mean using the cultural authority and visibility of office to dramatize unpalatable conditions that affect constitutents but are beyond the scope of municipal control or formal influence. It should be possible for black administrations to strike some balance, even one tilted heavily toward the growth side, between the interests of economic growth and the needs of the black community. If not, then the politicians should desist from exhorting voters to support them on any basis other than their development agendas.

Finally, black politicians should be forced to acknowledge the inherent

36. *Power and Crisis*, *op. cit.*, p. 221.

37. Clarence Stone in two recent articles explores with considerable depth the systemic characteristics and mechanisms through which the political order reproduces itself. See: "Systemic Power in Community Decision Making," *American Political Science Review* 74 (1980), pp. 978-990 and "Social Stratification, Nondecision-Making, and the Study of Community Power," *American Politics Quarterly* 10 (July, 1982), pp. 275-302. Also see John Gaventa, *Power and Powerlessness* (Urbana, Ill., 1980), pp. 3-32. The Weight of this logic is so great that Peterson, even in 1981, mistakes it for the immutable objective interest of the city as a totality.

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limitations of pluralist electoral politics and admit that it is a mode of political engagement that is useful for a number of purposes but is not the Afro-American struggle for social emancipation. If black officials make that acknowledgement (both when standing for election *and* when confronting dissatisfied constituents), then they may help to stimulate genuine political debate, and that could push all a step closer to realizing democratic ideals outside and *within* the Afro-American community.

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WERE WE WRONG?

by Murray Bookchin

Is it possible that the Left has been wrong about capitalist development and revolutionary change? Is is possible that 20th-century capitalism is not "moribund;" that the Russian Revolution did not usher in an "era of wars and revolutions," as predicted by Lenin; that capitalism does not unfold according to an "immanent" dialectic in which lie the "seeds" of its own destruction? Could it be that we are in a ceaseless "ascending phase" of capitalism?

We grasp at straws — Hungary in 1956, Paris in 1968, Czechoslovakia in 1969, Poland in the early 1980s — for evidence of a revolutionary proletariat without seeing the tragic marginality of these events. We turn to China, Cuba, Southeast Asia, Portugal, and Nicaragua for evidence of a "revolutionary era" or to the Korean and Vietnamese conflicts for evidence of a "war-ridden era" without seeing their nationalist limitations. We try to acknowledge how ambiguous they are in relation to the larger fact of a greatly expanded capitalism, the extent to which the marketplace has deepened its reach into the most intimate aspects of social life, the striking stability of the system as a whole, its chilling technological sophistication that has made meaningless all images of insurrectionary revolutions in the major centers of capitalism.

Nor can we continue to use "betrayals" to explain the failures of the past four generations. Such a consistent pattern of treachery suggests an internal weakness in the traditional socialist "perspective" of capitalism and revolution that raises more questions than it answers. The socialist project is fragile indeed if betrayal can occur so easily and if "success" yeilds bureaucratic traits so constrictive and reactionary that history is the better for its failures. The Russian Revolution was a catastrophe whose shadow has cast the entire century into darkness, and lives in our dreams more as a nightmare than a vision of hope.

The answers are not to be found in quietism and defeat. It is not defeatist to acknowledge that our *expectations* were unwarrated and the analyses that nourished them were equally faulty. Nor is accommodation possible if capitalism remains irrational to the core; that it has *always* been so (Marx's arguments about its "progressive role" to the contrary notwithstanding); and that it has *always* stood at odds with an abiding potential for freedom and ecological balance. But before that potential can be seen and a relevant practice developed from efforts to realize it, we must clear away the ideological fog that obscures our thinking. This fog arises from a conjuncture of forces that has been seriously misjudged by radicals for more than a century and from a misreading of phenomena that span the last four centuries.

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The Failures of the Classical Analysis

Whether one chooses to call capitalism "progressive" and "permanently revolutionary," to use Marx's words, or a "historically necessary evil," to use Bakunin's in regard to the state, the fact remains that WWI opened an entirely new era in radical social theory. The terrible blood-letting of the war posed serious challenges to the exuberant belief in progress that the previous century associated with the new social order. At the same time the revolutionary upheavals of the 1917-23 period awakened new hopes about the imminent likelihood of a rational society — of socialism and human emancipation. The universalism and humanism of the socialist project as it was formulated at that time has no equal in our own. Clearly, it was agreed, capitalism had ceased to be "progressive" or "historically necessary" irrespective of whether it was "evil" or not. If it had an "ascending phase" characterized by dramatic advances in technology and the demystification of all traditional human bonds, and between humanity and nature, it had definately not entered in a "descending phase" that guaranteed its self-extinction.

The socialist project was very specific about the shift in the cycle of capitalist development. In its "ascending phase," capitalism had presumably established the technical preconditions for socialism. It seemed to foster internationalism by secularizing all human bonds and experiences, making giant strides in cultural and political development, expanding human productivity and needs, rationalizing experience as well as production — and, above all, creating a special class, the proletariat, whose interests and afflictions inexorably drove it toward the abolition of the wage system, capitalism, and class society as such. Even if it was reasonable to suppose that without class consciousness the proletariat could no more become a "hegemonic class" than the most quietistic peasantry, socialist theorists emphasized that "objective events" — and in Lenin's view, a party of conscious revolutionaries — would provide the self-reflexivity that could have made a successful proletarian revolution possible.

The outbreak of WWII provided conclusive evidence of the failure of this entrenched analysis. For nearly ten years prior to the,war, world capitalism had reached an unprecendented period of stagnation and decline. The economy was frozen in crises that appeared to be chronic and intractable. Living standards, employment, hopes for recovery, and a belief in the legitimacy of the social order had ebbed to an all-time low by comparison with the pre-WWI era. Following the 1929 financial collapse, the proletariat emerged almost explosively as a social force. Although largely defensive, workers' insurrections led by socialists flared up in Austria and Spain (1934); general strikes swept France, marked by the raising of red flags over factories (1935); plant occupations and combative struggles with police in the U.S. created an illusion of a near-insurrectionary crisis, buttressed by agrarian unrest in which armed farmers closed down auctions and obstructed the movement of produce during farmers' strikes with road barricades. Despite revealing failures, this movement could claim definite if illusory successes: the election of

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the Popular Front in France and Spain; the recognition of industrial unions in the U.S.; and, finally, the shortlived achievements of the Spanish Revolution in 1936-37 which set an unprecedented example of workers' and peasants' self-management. Rarely had an insurgent mass movement achieved such ongoing persistence and militancy. Indeed, fascism seemed not only like an expression of a general crisis in the capitalist social order that called for a vigorous imposition of totalitarian controls but also like a defensive reaction by a traditional bourgeoisie to a growing and increasingly menacing labor movement whose militancy appeared to verge on outright social revolution.

Capitalism in the 1930s also appeared to be a "historical materialist" textbook example of a social order that had outlived its legitimacy. Not only was the decade stagnant economically and ravaged by class conflict; it was technologically stagnant as well. Judging from the literature of the times, a convincing case could be made for Marx's notion that "the material forces of production" had "come into conflict with the existing relations of production." Technology was bound by sharp corporate and monopolistic constraints that foreclosed innovation. Capitalism, it seemed, could no longer perform its "historically assigned" function of advancing the "material preconditions" for freedom; indeed, it seemed to block their development. A socialist revolution was needed, presumably, to bring society back into history, that is, to restore the momentum of technological advances which the bourgeois social order could no longer sustain.

Finally the outbreak of WWII was seen as the culmination of the "chronic crisis of capitalism" — its climax and literally the battleground for a resolution of the so-called "social question." The mass defection of leftist liberals to the Allied military cause did not induce despair among the already contracting radical movements of the 1940s. WWII, it was argued by traditional Marxists, was merely a continuation of WWI — an imperialist adventure that would reopen all the wounds that caused its predecessor to end in social revolution. Indeed, this second war was now visualized as a more short-lived conflict. The proletarian masses of the 1940s, presumably more educated by their experiences during the interwar period of capitalist decay, social conflict, revolutions, the usual diet of "betrayals" and "treachery" served up by social democracy and Stalinism, and an expanded sense of class solidarity and internationalism, would act to change society with greater determination than the previous generation. Given a reasonable amount of time, the contending imperialist blocs in the world conflict would reveal their "bankruptcy" and a subterranean labor movement, even in fascist Germany (to some, *especially* in fascist Germany) would pick up the dangling threads of 1917-18 and soon terminate the war in social revolution.

It is difficult to convey how tenaciously this scenario was held by the interwar generation of radicals. Nearly all of the radical theorizing of a century fed into these visions of social change and the detailed sequence of forecasts that the revolutionary socialist movement projected for the future in 1940 and well into the war itself. By the same token, any doubts about this analysis and its

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outcome yielded reactions that were equally far-reaching. Trotsky, more than any of the Bolsheviks, retained the classical perspective of the era, indeed, of the traditional labor movement itself. Shortly before his death he claimed that the war advanced very compelling challenges to the radical tradition. After expressing the usual ritualistic confidence in the above scenario and the certainties of its outcome, he turned to the implications of an alternative outcome. If capitalism emerged from the war intact, he warned, the revolutionary movement would have to re-examine its most fundamental premises. His murder in 1940 foreclosed the possibility of such a re-evaluation by his followers. But his words doggedly haunt the entire revolutionary project as it developed from the days of the earliest workers' insurrections. Trotsky's chilling confrontation with the project's failure enabled him to see WWII as a test of a traditional Marxist and Leninist veiw of the entire history of capitalist development.

WWII did not end early. It lasted for nearly six years. It did not terminate in revolutions. The German workers fought to the very doors of Hitler's bunker in Berlin without even a significant mutiny. Far from exhibiting any significant evidence of class solidarity and internationalism, the war was fought out on largely nationalist terms and for ideals redolent of 18th-century "patriotism," often descending to a savage irredentism and even racism, without the rationalist and utopian canons of the Enlightenment.

What is even more remarkable: capitalism emerged from WWII in a *stronger* position than in past generations. Although the war devoured between 40 and 60 million lives, the social order that claimed this unprecedented toll was never seriously questioned. With the exception of Russia and Spain, countries whose "proletariat" largely consisted of peasants in overalls, socialism and anarchism had failed to orient the European proletariat toward social revolution. In the 50 years that followed the last of the workers' upsurges, there is no evidence that the long experience of proletarian socialism has fostered any advance in human freedom. Indeed, in the name of socialism, totalitarian states today rule an immense portion of the world with a ruthlessness that is as dismal as that of their antecedents.

Technological innovation, in turn, acquired a momentum that has shattered every constraint — moral as well as economic — that society could raise against its elevation to pre-eminence in the human mind. To point to a ripening of the material conditions for socialism, communism, or anarchism as a justification for this breakthrough verges on black humor. A strong case can be made today for Adorno's Luddism in *Minima Moralia* — indeed, perhaps a stronger one that what he proposed. Never before has technological innovation emerged so much as a force in its own right to arrest any trend toward the realization of the "true society." The sophistication of today's weaponry reduces insurrectionary modes of social change to romanticism while hopes for the hegemony of the proletariat are little more than mere nostalgia. But what today haunts proletarian socialism even more than the end of the barricade as anything other than a symbol is the numerical decline of the

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industrial proletariat itself — the change in the very *personality* of what was once called wage labor. This proletariat now faces near-extinction by cybernation, a reality that is perhaps more persuasive testimony to the archaic character of classical socialism and anarchosyndicalism than the myth that this class will play a central role in social change. Long gone are the days when technology could be seen as a force promoting socialism. Technological innovation has taken on a life of its own and can be adduced not only as a means of economic and political regulation but as a causal factor in ecological breakdown. It is forming a history that can be written in large part autonomously: as the story of an avalanche of devices that make the citizen powerless, smother individual expression, and submerge personal creativity. Capitalism has clearly stabilized itself, assuming that it was *ever* unstable. And it has done so by establishing itself as a social given that is now as unquestioned as feudalism was in the 12th century. That is to say, capitalism now enjoys a psychological validity that renders its functions as free from challenges, indeed, consciousness, as the operations of the autonomic nervous system. The failure of the classical analysis is just as complete and just as disturbing, for it too has had a significant role in legitimating capitalism by its own interpretation of capitalism's origins and evolution.

The Failure of Classical Historiography

The contribution of the classical analysis to the legitimation of capitalism is most evident in the way socialism has assumed the institutional forms of recent capitalism. A disquieting similarity exists between the centralization of the state under capitalism and classical socialist goals. This goes back to Marx's *Capital* itself, which notwithstanding its brilliant analysis of the commodity, projects capitalist development into a phase that is so akin to its author's conception of socialism that the work ceases to be *authentically* critical in the sense of providing a point of departure for social liberation. To the contrary: the work enters into unknowing complicity with the development of capitalism toward its still unknown "maturation." It is not Marx's analysis that takes the commodity in hand but rather the commodity that takes possession of Marx's analysis and subtlely carries it into implied realms that he could never have anticipated or regarded as desirable.

But the real failure of "historical materialism" is a much deeper one. Marx's "class analysis," a still active dimension of his theoretical corpus, raises problems that have not been adequately dealt with by most of his acolytes. His "class analysis" is structured around the fundamental notion that the "domination of nature" cannot be achieved without the "domination of man by man," an implied view of nature whose practical implications have profoundly shaped the classical tradition.

Classes in Marx's larger social views were indispensable for separating humanity from "savagery," for bringing it into history and forming the material preconditions for liberation — liberation not only from the domination of man by man but from the domination of nature that made human domination "historically necessary." Within this convoluted dialectic, classi-

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cal socialism remained blind to ecological and gender problems, both of which are linked not only to the emergence of classes and exploitation, but are rooted even more fundamentally in the emergence of hierarchy and domination. Accordingly, attempts to formulate a socialist ecology and feminism to keep pace with the social movements of our day tend to be mere contrivances. Although sectarian socialists criticize these movements for lacking a class analysis, we are still flooded with gleanings from Marx on ecology and women that verge on caricature. Marx's class analysis reflects a very Victorian, indeed, bourgeois, marketplace notion of nature as a realm of domination, blindness, rivalry, and scarce resources that once defined every major discipline of the time from economics to psychology. The more contemporary ecological image of nature, particularly of ecosystems, as nonhierarchical, self-formative, mutualistic, and fecund has eluded the Marxian outlook with the result that American socialists today are more comfortable with the journalism of André Gorz, for whom "ecological" problems arise from the "decline in the rate of profit" than they are with more incisive works of ecophilosophy that preceded his *Ecology as Politics*.

This problem goes far beyond that of the weight that 19th-century notions impose on the classical socialist analysis. Nor can it be seen only as the result of a patchwork refurbishing of Marxism with concepts that are alien to its core ideas. Rather, what is most relevant here is the mischief Marx's "class analysis" has wrought in formulating a fresh interpretation of the capitalist development and the politics needed to deal with it. We are obliged to ask whether radical theory is well served by an image of social development based primarily on conflicting economic interests premised on the ownership or control of property. As an alternative to this, we might consider the possibility that capitalism itself represents an *exception* to a more widespread social development based on status and the ways in which the socialization process and society as a whole define the individual's position in the human community and maintain the individual's place in it.

Has capitalism, in fact, really revealed the material self-interest that has presumably guided society under the mask of ideology for thousands of years, as Marx claims, or has it rather *created* that interest in a basically different social dispensation that replaced status arrangements with classes? As Karl Polanyi observes, man "does not act so as to safeguard his individual interest in the possession of material goods; he acts so as to safeguard his social standing, his social claims, his social assets." Thus, the core for social analysis is the paramount social tie for which economic relations are merely a highly variable means rather than the "basis" for social interaction. To go beyond Polanyi's observation, we can see that his social tie may follow a libertarian pathway or an authoritarian one. Indeed, once early egalitarian societies began to break down, the libertarian pathway, interlaced with the authoritarian one, rises from subterranean depths in periods of social upheaval and then submerges in eras of social stability.

The notion that precapitalist society was primarily a society of orders, not

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simply of classes, is hardly new, but its implications as well as its premises have yet to be fully explored. One's community and the place one occupies in it is one of the most *human* attributes we possess. It is also the way in which we situate ourselves throughout our lives, the way in which familial care is projected beyond the family into the larger context of human relations. Thus, nearly all precapitalist societies projected family and kinship relations onto social life. Despite the growth of a purely juridical concept of citizenship and a rationalist concept of politics, lineage retained enormous importance in secular communities. Monarchies dealt with the territories under their control more as patrimonies than as nations or cultures, and it was by these biosocial norms that people "ordered" their economic lives into social *orders*, not according to economic elements which would have structured them as classes.

We must keep this distinction between a society of orders and a society of classes clearly in mind, inasmuch as it has important political and practical implications. A class analysis based exclusively on economic interests misreads history and misdirects practice. Social distortions and regressions can no longer be explained primarily by property relations, nor can they be rectified by socio-economic measures alone, such as nationalization, collectivization, or "workplace democracy." For what explodes all these proffered solutions to the tainted nature of modern society is the swollen legacy of command and obedience relations — in a word, hierarchy as the more basic substrate of all class relations.

To develop more fully the contrast between status societies and class societies, it is necessary to reject altogether the idea that capitalism as a society of classes could have emerged organically within the "womb" of feudalism, a society of orders. Capitalism's uniqueness must be seen in the light that traditional society as a whole — oriented around family and status — sheds upon it. No precapitalist world was equipped to deal with the formidable social and cultural irresponsibility that an uncontrolled market economy would foster. One does not have to accept the canons of *laissez-faire* to recognize that a market lacking any ethical, cultural, and institutional constraints would have horrified people even in the commercial world of the Renaissance, with its nuanced standards for commerce. The identification of the market with capitalism, in fact, results only from a highly specious reworking of historical fact. Markets existed for ages in many different forms, but they were carefully integrated into larger, more demanding, and socially more legitimate communities that structured life around orders, largely united by kinship and craft ties. These elements of early tribalism and village societies never disappeared completely from the precapitalist world. It was precisely capitalism, the uncontrolled market, that became society, or, more precisely, began to eat away at society as a cancer, a malignancy that threatened the very existence of the social bond itself. It is only in the 20th century, especially in post-WWII America that capitalism emerged from its position as a predominant force *in* society to become a substitute for society, corroding all familial and kinship

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ties — and reducing the population as a whole to buyers and sellers in a universal, ever-expanding marketplace.

Capitalism, *always a dormant system* in the larger context of precapitalist social orders, essentially burst upon the world in a period of sweeping social decline. The feudal system of orders which the absolutist monarchies of Europe seemingly held together had fallen into complete decay. By the 18th century, Europe existed in what was little more than a social vacuum within which capitalism could grow and ultimately flourish, a period in which there was a general erosion of *all* mores, not least of which were traditions that inhibited the growth and authority of the burgher strata itself. Capitalism began to emerge as a predominant economy feeding on the decomposing corpses of all traditional status-oriented societies. It pandered to the vices of a decadent nobility, to the profligacy of a malignant court, to the indulgent pretentions of the *nouveau riches* and it battened on the misery of abandoned masses — peasants, laborers, guildsmen, and lumpenproletarians — that feudalism had cast aside to fend for themsleves with the decline of the patronal system and its traditional nexus of rights and duties. The good "burghers" of the declining feudal world and the era of absolutism — the so-called "nascent bourgeoisie" — were no less status-oriented and later no less royalist than the "classes" they were supposed to oppose and displace. There is nothing to show that these nascent bourgeois were capitalist in any unique sense other than their desire to accumulate capital with a view toward buying titles that would make them part of the nobility or acquire land that would validate their noble status.

Nor is there much evidence that the nascent bourgeois had political aspirations that "historically" pitted them against the traditional status structures of the *ancien regime.* Quite to the contrary: their hostility was mainly directed against the arrogance of the nobility, against its exclusively, not against the principle of ennoblement and oligarchy as such. Nor did the bourgeoisie exhibit any republican, much less democratic, proclivities. Their detestation of the masses was no less savage, indeed often more so, than that of the nobility, which often included enlightened, urban individuals riddled by a sense of guilt over their wealth and prerogatives. England, not America, was the political ideal of the French bourgeoisie — a constitutional monarchy structured around a collaborative aristocracy joined with a socially mobile commercial and industrial middle class. Republicanism was almost universally regarded by the Enlightenment as the door to political license and democracy was simply equated with "anarchy," a word that speckled the vocabulary of the revolutionary politicians throughout the 1790s.

Radical historians' emphasis on Paris during the French Revolution makes it difficult to bring the revolution into a clear perspective. Paris was the administrative center of the monarchy and the urban playground of the French aristocracy, a city that harbored thriving financial establishments that pandered to the court and family-owned workships given over to the production of luxury goods. The real centers of French bourgeois life, particularly

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the textile industry around which the industrial revolution was to develop, were cities like Lyons and Amiens, which, taken together with commerical centers like Bordeaux and major seaports like Marseilles and Toulon, more accurately reflected the bourgeois spirit of the revolutionary period than Paris, a magnet for the more radical elements of the intelligentsia and the shabby quarters and decaying slums occupied by a huge petit bourgeoisie composed of professionals, shopkeepers, printers, artisans, and a socially amorphous mass of day laborers and lumpenproletarians, the well-known *sans culottes.*

All of these cities were bitterly anti-Jacobin and often militantly royalist. The suppression of the Lyons *sans-culottes* in May, 1793, was the work, in Lefebvre's words, of "the bourgeoisie who had remained monarchist" as well as partisans of the old order from other strata of the population. "Amiens never become solidly republican," notes Lynn Hart in her book on the political culture of the revolution. In fact, as late as 1799, five years after the counterrevolutionary Thermidorians had dispatched Robespierre and the Jacobins, the city was torn by anti-conscription riots that resounded with such denunciations as "Down with the Jacobins! Long live the King! Long live Louis XVIII!" Even the stolid bourgeois Thermidoreans found Amiens an embarrassment. The Girondist seaports and commercial towns of Marseilles and Toulon repressed the Jacobins (by no means the most radical faction in the revolution) with the same vigor that Paris repressed the Girondists. Indeed, Toulon had become so royalist by 1793 that that city delivered itself over to the English rather than submit to the authority of revolutionary Paris.

The image of the French or, for that matter, of the English or American revolutions as "bourgeois" is a simplistic projection of present-day ideological biases onto the past.[1] It is not helpful simply to note that the bourgeoisie benefited in the long run from these revolutions. This tells us very little about the forces, motives, and ideals of the revolutionary era — an era opened by English Puritans in the 1640s and brought to a close by Spanish anarchosyndicalists in the 1930s. English yeomen, American farmers, and, most notably, French peasants were the immediate beneficiaries of these revolutions no less than the early bourgeoisie. Doubtless, the bourgeoisie ultimately became the *greatest beneficiary* of the revolutions, but complete supremacy came to it very unevenly over the course of time and in a very mixed form. The Jeffersonian "Revolution of 1800" was largely a political victory of U.S. agrarian strata: the American bourgeoisie's interests were more directly tied to Hamilton's self-

1. Perez Zagorin scornfully deflates Eric Hobsbawm's depiction of the English Revolution as a "bourgeois revolution" resulting from a chronic crisis within feudalism that forms the historical materialist correlate of the "chronic cisis" within capitalism. What is wrong with Hobsbawn's thesis, Zagorin says, "is the absence of evidence that could demonstrate the actuality of a general crisis in terms described." The details of Zagorin's criticism are too numerous to repeat here. Nor is it possible here to deal with the liberties Hobsbawn takes in dealing with precapitalist movements, notably his atrocious treatment of Spanish anarchosyndicalism in *Primitive Rebels.* Cf. Perez Zagorin, *Rebels and Rulers, 1500-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982) and my *The Spanish Anarchists* (New York: Harper and Row, 1977).

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styled "Federalist Party" than Jefferson's Republican Party, and political power in America — as in England — was held by the gentry, occasionally in direct conflict with the financiers, merchants, and industrialists who were not to gain complete control of the republic until the Reconstruction Era. To say, as Hunt does, that the French Revolution placed the bourgeoisie in the political saddle because the "revolutionary officials . . . were either merchants with capital, professionals with skills, artisans with their own shops, or, more rarely, peasants with land" is to make a grab-bag of the word "bourgeois" — indeed, to use the word more in a feudal sense as burghers than a modern sense, as capitalists. This kind of "bourgeoisie" was in no sense a stable class but a *pot pourri* of highly disparate strata that was unified more by what it was not — namely, nobles and priests — than what it seemed to be. It was simply the Third Estate. To add, as Hunt does, that it was "anti-feudal, anti-aristocrat, and anti-absolutists" is to raise the question of what constitutes an authentic bourgeoisie. Presumably, not the industrialists of Amiens and the merchants of Toulon — if Hunt is correct. Least of all the Parisian Thermidorians who so willingly turned the French state over to Napoleon who, in Lefebvre's own words, "became reconciled with the church, pardoned the emigrés, and took into his service all of those — aristocrats and bourgeoisie, royalists and republicans — who were willing to support him."

The fact is that radical theoreticians decided to designate the revolutions of the Enlightenment as bourgeois and to deal with monarchial absolutism as preparatory for the emergence of a predetermined capitalism. Perry Anderson was to treat absolutism as a basically feudal phenomenon to support a very ill-founded theory of the stages of history. This is teleology with a vengeance — a teleology that denies any spontaneity to history by nailing it to the hard and splintered cross of necessity. That history can have meaning and direction is vulgarized into a concept of historical natural law, operating in human affairs with the grim causality that is imputed to its operation in socially conditioned images of nature. Capitalism, in effect, ceases to be a result of a social process and turns into its very substance. The fact that capitalism is the most *asocial* and malignant system to emerge in human experience is in great part the result of *decay* in history rather than a *product* of the elaboration of world history. It is a "social order" that flourishes cancerously on the corpses of traditional societies. Today, the interaction between the traditional centers of capitalism and the noncapitalist world differs significantly from earlier periods, when the contact between the two was more equitable. Like a metatastic cell, the commodity has done its work and the doors of traditional societies have been flung wide open to unrestricted exploitation.

This lengthy discussion of the so-called bourgeois revolutions, capitalist development, and the distinction between status and class societies has been guided not by any abstract concern for the historical record but by explicitly political reasons. Regarding the English, American, and French revolutions as "bourgeois" has been very harmful politically, resulting in a highly *econo-*

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mistic exploration of the revolutionary era. George Rudé, to take a case in point, has so closely correlated fluctuations of the price of bread with crowd behavior in the French Revolution that the *sans culottes* emerge more as stomachs than as vital, politically concerned human beings. Charles Beard's well-intentioned treatment of the American Revolution is so biased by a preoccupation with class interest that his insightful correction of purely ideological historical accounts suffers heavily from a crude economic determinism. Such swings of the pendulum may be necessary to correct exaggerations of both accounts — a starry-eyed idealism at one extreme and crude self-interest at the other — but they have gone too far. That men like the English Leveller, John Lilburne, or the American yeoman radical, Dan Shays, were concerned with larger social issues than the cost of bread or farm foreclosures tends to be lost in a welter of statistical data aimed at proving the predominance of material interests over ideological and cultural ones. David P. Szatmary's *Shays' Rebellion* points out that Shays and the yeomen who followed him into insurrection in 1787 rose against the newly founded U.S. to preserve a complex *way of life*, not merely to cow the Boston merchants who threatened to dispossess them of their lands.

The sinister side of radical historiography has been explored repeatedly. If history uses humanity to fulfill ends of its own, then suffering, cruelty, and despotism can be justified in the name of progress and ultimately freedom. Ideology, ethics, culture, politics — and, of course, leaders — are moved to act beyond their own understanding of events by Hegel's "cunning of reason." Lenin, by superadding the party and its political consciousness to the "objective" movement of history — a history that has a foresight, "lawfullness," and goal of its own — did not deny this Hegelian concept of Spirit in history. He merely bureaucratized Spirit with an apparatus of self-anointed professional revolutionaries who consciously executed the designs of history in the ultimate interests of the unknowing masses. The result of this authoritarian logic was the usurpation of the Russian Revolution by a party that professed to represent the objective interests of the proletariat often in the very course of suppressing the proletariat itself.

We have paid for this "materialism" by suffocating every ethical and humanist dimension in history. We have tallied up the statistics for economic growth and productivity in "socialist societies" in juxtaposition with the statistics for mass murder and the formation of entire populations of slave laborers to render our ultimate verdict on the "success" or "failure" of these seemingly "socialist" institutions. Freedom plays no role whatever in this tally. More than any modern ideology other than fascism, socialism has traded off liberty for "distributive justice" — an exchange that has poisoned its very image of everything human, turning society itself into a mere machine for the conquest of nature. What is most disconcerting today is the interpretation and the politics stemming from this disastrous vision of history. If the English, American, and French revolutions are not bourgeois revolutions, what are they? If the classical revolutionary era has come to an end, what kind of politics

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follows from this? Finally, if the proletariat is not a revolutionary class, what is the "historical subject" that will transform a hierarchical, and exploitative society into one that is egalitarian, classless, and free?

Toward a New Radical Agenda

Capitalism is a system that is *permanently* counter-revolutionary — Marx's views to the contrary notwithstanding. Nowhere did it rescue or advance the human spirit of cooperation that existed in the most despotic societies and the most parochial communities of the past; at no time did its sense of charity extend beyond a utilitarian manipulation of the masses. Few of its material benefits, technical advances, or wealth were used to better the human condition. Capitalism was a blight on society from the moment it began to rise. Almost every attempt to arrest the development of capitalism early on was more progressive than the progressive role imputed to the bourgeois mode of production. The Luddites were essentially right. They were not reactionary when they tried to halt the rapacious advance of the Industrial Revolution. So too were the Critical-Utopian socialists and communists, the Proudhonians and Fourierists on whom Marx and Engels heaped their scorn in the *Communist Manifesto.* Even the English gentry who wrote the Speenhamland Law of 1795 were right, however self-serving their motives, when they tried to prevent the peasantry from being delivered wholesale over to the wage system. And the Russian populists were right when they tried to rescue the village, particularly its mutualistic features, from the travail of capitalist industrialism.

The list is almost endless. In large part, it consists of the hidden libertarian tendency in history that tried to provide an alternative to Speenhamland as well as the wage system, to backbreaking manual labor as well as soul-corroding factory work, to parochialism as well as the world market system. To think that present-day urban misery is the only alternative to rural poverty is to fall into a trap that so paralyzes creative thought and practice that radical theory can no longer distinguish what is from what could be. Movements did exist that opposed status societies as well as class societies, feudalism as well as capitalism, technological stagnation as well as mindless technological innovation. In the 20th century, one thinks of Russia and Spain, the populists and the anarchists, as striking examples of highly moral social movements that tried to bypass capitalist development without acceding to the oppressive features of autocratic and quasi-feudal societies. The "third way" these movements offered was simply suppressed — not only by the state (Stalinist and fascist) but by radical historians themselves, whose history of the Left was often highly selective and biased toward the conventional socialism of our time.

In any case, this much is clear: We must acknowledge the *permanent*, retrogressive nature of capitalism *from its very inception.* We must see it as a saprophytic system that is by definition asocial, and recognize it as a mechanism that will die on its own only like a cancer that destroys its host. We have to understand that the economic interpretation of history and society is the extension of the bourgeois spirit into the totality of the human condition.

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Capitalism will not decay. It will either destroy society as we have known it and possibly much of the biosphere along with it, or it will be corroded, weakened, and hollowed out by libertarian traditions. It would be difficult to explain why the "Fourth World" has offered such massive resistance to the "blessings" of industrialism unless we invoke the power of strong traditions, entrenched lifeways, deeply held values, beliefs and customs. It would be difficult to explain why the Barcelona proletarian-peasants burned money and disdained every lure of opulence after the city fell into their hands without invoking the *moral* power of their libertarian beliefs — a sensibility that was to often stand in sharp contrast to the pragmatic mentality of their leaders.

The only revolutionary era on which we can premise any future for radical change is the one that lies behind us. No cycle of socialist or anarchist revolution will follow the so-called "bourgeois" cycle initiated some three centuries ago. The arsenal of our time has developed so far beyond the classical insurrectionary models on which traditional radical theory has been fixated as to make unthinkable the recurrence of another Spain or Russia. Indeed, no creative discussion of a radical politics can even begin without acknowledging the change this simple technical fact has introduced into the "art of insurrection" — to use Trotsky's words.

By the same token, the only agent on which we can premise future radical change emerges from the melding of traditional groups into a public sphere, a body politic, a community imbued with a sense of cultural and spiritual continuity and renewal. This community, however, is constituted only in the ever-present act of an ever-dynamic effort of public and self-assertion that yields a sharp sense of selfhood. Collectivity thus melds with individuality to produce rounded human beings in a rounded society. Direct action assumes the form of direct democracy: the participatory forms of freedom that rest on face-to-face assemblies, rotation of public functions, and, where possible, consensus.

Such a community must presume that solidarity outweights status or class interests, that its way of life can absorb the centrifugal interests that separate human from human, that a shared ethics imparts the consciousness, conscience, and sympathy needed to override a sense of selfhood that risks degenerating into selfishness and that preoccupation with private concerns so characteristic of the contemporary therapeutic age. No proletariat has ever fit these standards of social and political propriety as a class phenomenon. Indeed, class is so integrally tied up with interest that it precludes the ability to voice broadly human concerns. Hence, no possibility ever existed that the proletariat, particularly the hereditary one that had a long tradition of class being behind it, could ever speak for the general interest of society. It is noteworthy that the individual, who is so readily conglomerated into a class existence by radical historiography, tends to behave with greater decency than the mass. The denial of the individual's role in history has had the sinister effect of denying the moral integrity of the person in contrast to the role

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assigned to masses as forces in history and to demolish the only armor people have against the degrading effects of "civilization" — the personal ethics, simple etiquete, psychological uniqueness, and human intimacy of care and understanding that can challenge monstrous excesses with personal, day-to-day resistence and delegitimation.

This brings us back to what was *not* bourgeois in the so-called bourgeois revolutions — the utopian dimension of human liberty, equality, and fraternity that panicked the real bourgeois into Hamilton's royalist conspiracies in America and, finally, the dissolution of the republic into Napoleonic autocracy in France. The American yeomanry and the Parisian *sans culottes* did not rise against their rulers because they were interested in freeing trade or fostering capital accumulation. They rose to defend their own conception of a distinctly ethical ideal: freedom from arbitrary authority, an intensely communal world that fostered intercourse among their people, humaneness in dealing with individuals irrespective of status and wealth, in fact, a return to the regulation of commerce (as evidenced by the *sans-culottes* demands for price controls and Shays' belief in the yeomanry's right to land irrespective of legal entailments). By all standards of historical materialism, they were reactionaries who believed in a moral economy and tried to hang onto traditional rights and duties as they construed them. To revolt meant literally to restore ancient liberties, communal lifeways, and responsibilities. Insofar as these revolutions invariably went beyond the privileged institutions of English constitutionalism, they were no more bourgeois than the Bolshevik take-over was proletarian. They were first and foremost republican or democratic revolutions that were foisted on the bourgeoisie — a class that vigorously resisted their libertarian features. The bourgeoisie did not make these revolutions; it was saddled with them two centuries ago.

The tension between the revolutionary tradition to which even the bourgeoisie must make its obeisances and the corporate reality that stands at odds with it constitutes the greatest single obstacle to the unrestrained supremacy of capital. Like the *estates generale* that blocked the French monarchy in 1789, the bourgeoisie carries the heritage of its beginnings on its shoulders like a lead weight. More importantly, this alien heritage is also the mystique that lends moral legitimacy to the bourgeoise's otherwise colorless and prosaic reality. The aversion of Americans for the state, their mythology of self-sufficiency, local control, and individualism are at once the disguise for bourgeois rapacity and the Damocles sword that hangs over the bourgeoisie. The identification of family with the family-farm, of individuality with property, of self-reliance with self-employment, of liberty with local control, and tyranny with the state, conscription, surveillance, and police intervention into politics — all limit the capitalist enterprise in America and are as obstructive as they are self-serving.

Thus, a strong argument can be made for the need to recognize the hidden libertarian content of the American Dream: the possibility of democratizing the republic and radicalizing the democracy. Herein lies a radical agenda,

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rooted in the tension between corporatism and republicanism, centralism and democracy, bourgeois society and a libertarian society, that may create from the failed "perspectives" of the past a new reading of the future. A new libertarian politics must emerge from the debris of the classical Left. Politics in its original sense presupposed a very distinct public sphere — the community, be it a town, a neighborhood, or a city articulated into neighborhoods — in which passive residents could be transformed into active citizens by virtue of their direct access to the levers of power. Hence, politics cannot be divorced from an operational scale that fosters it: the community. Lacking this operational scale, it withers away, or worse, it becomes transformed into parliamentarism and the delegation of all power to professional politicians. Politics, so conceived, is *municipalist* or it does not exist at all.

Municipalism is a politics structured around the assembly of the citizen body, not its representatives. Collectively and invidually, it must acquire a sense of itself, its social personality, its form. It is a politics that must not only involve citizens in communal administration; it must also *educate* them in public life.

Politics, so conceived, is the *communizing* core of community, the process of citizen-formation, the school in which character is developed as well as the art of citizenship. It is the medium for expanding one's *competence* in the fully human sense of the term and not just in the sense of skills in the performance of responsibilities.

The recreation of the *polis* has many aspects. Suffice it to say that an ecological sensibility is fostered by the interdependence of a parent and child, of children with each other and with adults, by production conceived as a symbiotic relation, not a domineering one, with tools that move with the grain of substance and its varied possibilities, not by forcing themselves on "raw matter" and ruthlessly torturing it into mere objects of utility. Finally, an ecological sensibility includes a politics of creative citizenship that opens a new sphere for education as well as administration, a politics of self-fulfillment and solidarity.

Ultimately the democratization of the republic and the radicalization of democracy is achievable only as a municipalist movement linked together confederally in opposition to the centralized nation-state. Hence, it will either move toward a radical form of libertarian municipalism or it will degenerate into another form of liberal parliamentarism that will end in the prevailing corporative politics. The contrast between politics and parliamentarism, between the management of the *polis* and statecraft, cannot be drawn too sharply. In this distinction, the role of consciousness is decisive. Politics consists as much in the attainment of self-reflexivity of goals and processes as it does in the social functions it performs and the forms of freedom it institutionalizes.

To this end, the *polis* must itself be created out of smaller units — groups of people for whom the cultivation of consciousness is a calling in its own right. Education within this grouping is both an effort to realize the self-reflexivity that enters into an authentically creative citizenship and the means of mobil-

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izing people for a new praxis. Self-reflexivity cannot be separated from self-administration without reducing the group to a cellular academy at one extreme or an affintiy group at the other. The formation of a collective subject that is not burdened by authoritarian Bolshevism is thus attained in the crafting of subjectivity as a *participatory* enterprise. Ultimately, this new radical agenda is as meaningful as the force-field and confrontation it creates between two powers: the centralized corporate state and the decentralized municipalities.

If the dissolution of the state is not an imminent possibility, the creation of a *counterpower* to it in the form of the libertarian municipalist confederation is a reasonable possibility at some time in the future. In any case, the problem of discriminating between politics and statecraft, the nature of one's participation in liberation movements, and finally the distinction between the municipality and the state itself, all pose problems that must be resolved with due regard for the nature of capitalist development.

Capitalism is not a decaying social order; it is an ever-expanding order that grows beyond the capacity of any society to contain its ravages and cope with its predatory activities. If capitalism is not abolished in one way or another, it will annihilate social life as such or, at least, do an excellent job of undermining it and the biosphere on which all life depends. The revolutions that we so facilely designate as bourgeois, i.e., the revolutions that created enough social instability to remove traditional constraints to capitalism's growth, were not cherished by the bourgeoisie. Rather, they saddled it with a heritage that now constitutes a major obstacle to its complete and unchecked dominance.

What appeals to Americans today is not the decorative side of their dream but its authentically libertarian side. Ideology still counts enough in the U.S. to bind a highly industrialized and increasingly centralized society in the straitjacket of a largely agrarian, individualistic, and still somewhat federal constitution with all the traditions that support this imagery. Nationalized or even collectivized property may be as onerous to most Americans as corporatized and monopolistic property. The *municipal* control of economic resources, by contrast, is much easier to accept. The current withdrawal of the nation-state from involvement with localities, economically as well as politically, poses the issue of municipal control more poignantly than at any time in American history, and the public uneasiness that accompanies the growth of state power is a desideratum in an increasingly totalitarian world.

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TERRORISM AND DEMOCRACY*

by François Furet

Although this analysis tackles the immense question of political terrorism, it nevertheless has limited ambitions. It treats only that part of terrorist movements whose primary object is the destruction of modern liberal democracy and its institutions. It analyzes only the Italian Red Brigades and the German Fractional Red Army, not Irish, Basque, Corsican, or Palestinian terrorism. Actually, the destruction of physical objects or the murder of human beings which characterizes this political practice generally takes as its goal and justification those political or national rights which have until now been denied by the authority against which the attack is directly or indirectly aimed. The terrorists invoke the absence of these rights as justification, since the situation leaves no other choice for political action but naked violence. Without democratic liberty or a national State, what method is more spectacular and indispensible for calling attention to the pressing need than the terrorist attack? This method draws the justification of its provisional necessity from the very reality it seeks to end.

The two situations, one characterized by a democratic claim and the other by national ambition, are not incompatible. But they reflect different political universes and cannot be superimposed. The most common situation feeds terrorism in the name of an oppressed nationality that demands territory and a flag. This leads logically to the practice of terrorism since the claim of national separation and the institution of a new State forces its partisans to deny the existence of a civil pact with the oppressor State. In their eyes, this pact, in reality, hides a situation of war analogous to that which exists when different nations are in a state of declared war. In such cases, civil law between citizens and compatriots is suspended and terrorist attacks are simply normal acts of war.

On the other hand, in the case where the terrorist's goal is not a national state but rather liberties within the political system, terrorism is linked to the idea that the only option for a citizen or a group deprived of rights is to express the imprescriptible character of this situation through the radical negation of the existing state of things considered as a pure relation of force. The idea of violence against violence is justified by a goal which involves the founding or the reinstitution of law based on individual rights, a goal the adversary does not possess. Violence is a detestable but inevitable method in the service of a good cause.

*English translation by Martha Calhoun.

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Terrorism most often appears linked to modern forms of the nation and democracy which give its expeditious practices the legitimacy of a political project. But it is at the same time pre-national and pre-democratic. Today's world shows how the modern legitimations invoked by terrorists can be blended with much older concepts. For example, in the case of the Shiites and Iran, terrorist activity allied religious fanaticism which formed the basis of militancy with Leninist references to imperialism. Their goal is not really national since they intend to liberate the entire Arab world; still less is the goal democratic. In fact, they revive the age-old religious call, together with images of imperialism and the will of the people. These references to modern political culture separate the Beirut suicide commandos from traditional religious messianism and define them as terrorists. But this limited example also permits us to understand to what extent these references can be superficial, a veneer pasted onto another order of sociological and psychological reality. Even though terrorism can only be conceptualized in relation to what constitutes politics in the modern world, it is fed from another side by the pre-democratic universe.

The bloody exploits of the German Baader group and the Italian Red Brigades have shaken two great European postwar democracies. The appearance of terrorism coming from militant organizations who appeal to the extreme left in the name of a democratic attempt to outbid democracy in countries where democratic institutions are the object of a consensus seems to be a radical innovation. Actually, it is easier to understand how the extreme right can be (and has been, from time to time, according to circumstances) tempted by terrorism. This temptation conforms to the old right wing tradition of rejecting democracy; it expresses its residual character, since it is progressively beaten back by the formidable capacities of political integration of the principle of popular sovereignty. The extreme left's recourse to terrorism calls into question precisely that assumed incompatibility between democracy and terrorism. Terrorism is no longer the pre-democratic residue which will be displaced by the electoral ballot. Here, it must be thought of as a *product* of democracy. Terrorism no longer stands at the headwaters but well downstream of universal sufferage.

To elaborate this somewhat scandalous idea suggested by recent events, we can begin with the hypothesis that modern democratic power no longer leaves a place for this right of resistance which was the object of so many discussions within modern European monarchies. The classic Monarchy is inseparable from an order of reality situated above and beyond it. The King is above the law but also subject to it. He is superior because he makes the law; he finds its principle, its force and its generality in his person. But this rule that in a Monarchy the King makes the law, and hence can also unmake it, is in reality subject to both external and internal limitations. The King cannot infringe on the principles of divine justice which prescribe the excercise of Christian virtues in the government of his subjects without distorting the power he has received from God. But he must also respect the purely human

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dispositions prior to his existence with respect to the timeless character of monarchical dignity throughout the succession of Kings. This is what Montesquieu in *L'Esprit des Lois* calls the "depository of the laws" which are preserved by certain political bodies. Finally, he cannot transform the kingdom's "fundamental laws" which are at the origin of the pact with the nation: for example, the rules which govern transmission of the crown, the inalienability of royal patrimony, or respect for the property of each of his subjects. Public law in the *Ancien Régime* conceived the authority of a single man as limited only by natural reason, custom, providence and jurisprudence. The king is *lex animata*: the law speaks through his mouth, but is external to him.

Democratic law, having nothing beyond itself, has no court of appeal. Here, obedience to the law depends not at all on content but purely on the formal procedures which led to its promulgation. In a system where the law is made and spoken by a regularly elected majority which is the legal holder of power, the principle and form of both legality and the production of law, there is no longer any place for the tyrant, i.e., for a nonlaw presented as law by an authority unfaithful to that which conditions its own legitimacy.

Here, we recognize Carl Schmitt's analyses, where the power of the democratic state eliminates the very notion of the right of resistence and *a fortiori* the old recourse to tyrannicide. The practice of majority rule, putatively the expression of the will of the people, at least tendentially voids the idea of illegality. The majority transforms everything it does into law by a sort of premium that it confers on all its dispositions. And since there are no longer any meta-juridical values which disqualify this or that disposition in the name of nature or reason, contemporary legal formalism dissolves the old idea of a potentially illegal exercise of legal power. The figure of the functioning tyrant disappears from the field of strictly positive constitutional norms; all resistance to legislative exercise of power can now be only a violation of law.

Another figure bequeathed to modern Europe by the old philosophy in order to legitimate resistance has also disappeared — the usurping tyrant who seized power without having legitimate title to it.[1] This figure disappears because the modern democratic majority is incompatible with usurpation. By definition, this majority cannot take power without having title to it, since its existance in fact constitutes the only juridical title necessary to accede to power. Such is the powerful and fragile simplicity of democratic law.

1. Actually, modern political philosophy abandons the recourse to tyrannicide when it elaborates the democratic origin of power, that is, the form of a political sovereignty constructed from equal individuals and consequently closed on itself. We can clearly see this in Hobbes. If power ceases to be a natural relation between men inscribed in the order of things, and becomes the product of a convention between individuals, it transforms the multitude of these individuals into a unity of the will of the people. From this point on, there is no longer any division or even the possibility of division between the sovereign and the subjects, since there is a relation of identity between them, consubstantial in contract and in the fundamental relation of representation which renders them inseparable. This is why Hobbes rejects the Aristotelian idea of forms of the degeneration of power. Corruption of the Monarchy through tyranny, for example, has in his eyes only the sense of a simple subjective perference. It is another way of naming the same power; but not wanting to say that one does not like it. In reality, tyrany is nothing other than a strong Monarchy.

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Because the majority determines the entire legal domain, citizens' resistance to illegal power is confined to the factual activity of the conquest of majority power in its quest for alternatives. But this empirical possibility of one day substituting oneself for the majority does not change the all or nothing structure which characterizes democratic legality which is constrained by the model of the constituted legal framework. That is to say, it must accept as a given the very right it wants to modify or abolish. The democratic opposition begins with the recognition of the democratic majority. It is perhaps this logical and juridical impasse, born out of an all-powerful legal formalism, that terrorism seeks to dislodge. In effect, terrorism dissolves the idea of a fundamental law which produces positive laws by using procedures which are the radical negation of that fundamental democratic idea — naked violence and armed combat.

The terrorist substitutes the concrete universe of embodied power for the formal abstraction of power, government by impersonal norms, complex procedures for realizing the rule of the majority and for organizing people within power. He does not wish to know anything of the formal rules which govern the transmission of power by consulting the people, since the object of all his action is first to withdraw these rules in order to subsequently eliminate them. Behind these rules he sees force, ruse, interests and all too concrete passions of the oppressors which are the real truth of the State. Thus, the terrorist recovers without knowing it the general view of premodern political representation. He reconstructs a private version of the idea of public power. He breaks the modern abstraction of the State in reducing it to its provisional embodiments. He restores an anthropomorphic figure to democratic sovereignty in the person of the politicians and functionaries. To destroy the abstract figures elaborated over four hundred years of European political philosophy, it suffices to reduce them to physical people who constitute ephemeral reality. This is effected by an apparent regression to the time when the distinction between public function and the individual who occupies it did not exist. In this way, the terrorist wins on all fronts. He makes the modern State into an absolute lie by refuting the claims without which it ceases to exist. For if this State is only the individuals who do its business, it is nothing except itself. That is to say, the State, like these individuals, is a prisoner of interests which are corrupt, multiple, and particular, but also mortal and hence vulnerable.

However, this return to the archaic also borrows from the modern. The terrorist not only targets the judge, but also the industrialist and the union leader. His rejection of the juridical nature of democratic power leads him to extend the embodiment of this power to any individual occupying a concrete position of domination. For democratic formalism's lie concerning the equality of citizens is best unmasked in the economic domain. This reference to the epitome of modern reality in the form of oppression makes us understand better that the terrorist project's real goal is to attack sovereign power in its constituent fragility and to restore its fundamental attributes of inalienability and indivisibility.

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To do this, the terrorists return to the Aristotelian idea of tyrannicide, retained in weakened form by medieval and modern Europe — that is, the subject's right to violence is justified by a legality superior to positive law. But since terrorism no longer can seek recourse to a transcendant norm, it completely distorts the law. In reality, it inherits from democratic civilization the tautology that the only foundation of the law is the law itself. Against this abstract form of the will of the people, any attempt to reconstitute some sort of legality *sui generis* which expresses concretely this will of the people leaves no other choice but to justify armed resistance by invoking a concrete people which is no longer defined by equal citizenship, but rather by inequality of conditions. Class substitutes for justice or divine law as the legitimation of violence which is superior to the law.

This is how the terrorist ideology partially challenges the abstract nature of the modern idea of power. Modern democratic power is without flesh or blood, based on fragile fiction of sovereignty, subject to the rule of the many, but also to the principle of the individual who is the basis of its formation. In place of the modern idea of power, terrorist ideology substitutes an organicist idea, a "holistic" type of social representation in which the modern definition actually revives the medieval notion of society as an aggregate of hierarchical unities where the superior encompasses the inferior. The notion of class coincides with the people, it "represents" them in the archaic sense of the term. That is, it integrates identity by function. The notion of social class, created to conceptualize the divisions and dynamic of modern individualist society, ends as the substitute for the notion of the people in a configuration which takes its force from a pre-modern representation of social reality.

Thus, by a curious reversal, the most abstract form of democracy coincides with the most meticulous attention to the mechanisms and concrete conditions of its formation. Modern terrorism's critique of democratic formalism is based on the definition of the people as the real society, but it gives rise to originary abstraction: this "people" is comparable to the "people" of "contract" theorists in sixteenth and seventeenth century Europe. It is a collective unity whose reality must be presupposed since this unity is what grounds the convention from which society takes its principle. Just as the monarchy rests on a primitive contract between King and Nation, terrorist action legitimates itself by an ontological accord with the will of the people. This will is no longer the aggregate of the individuals who constitute it. Rather, it is the will itself which gives reality and sense prior to this aggregate.

The intellectual roots of contemporary extreme left terrorism in Europe seem to be an attempt to theorize the right to resist democratic power. In a modern version of tyrannicide, terrorism calls for armed violence against each of the multiple tyrants who oppress the people. In this sense, terrorism offers the left a new way of political thinking which was probably one of the secrets of its relative seductiveness in the late sixties and early seventies. Still, as the sociological analyses of the movement make clear, it remains fundamentally rooted in the Marxist tradition. The situation, however, has

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changed radically since the time when Marxist socialism vilified individual terrorist attacks as an anarchist practice which was adventurist, pre-scientific, and to be condemned in all cases. Not that all Marxists today approve of violence: clearly the opposite is the case. What is new is that contemporary terrorism both proclaims itself and is thought to be the true Marxism — their adversaries would still say its derivative. For both, it grew on the terrain of Marxism.

The central philosophical legacy of Marxism for terrorism is the critique of formal democracy and the illusory nature of political citizenship in bourgeois society. This theme has been largely discarded by the two great political families with Marxist paternity. The Social Democrats reject it since they have made universal suffrage the rule of their conquest, or of their renunciation of power; the Communists who on the contrary made that critique their rule of political behavior have recourse to it less frequently since in the USSR the rejection of formal democracy appears at the heart of the totalitarian nature of the regime. In the West, Communist parties have no choice but to render hommage to the free vote of the electorate; but they remain doctrinally linked through Marx and Lenin to the necessity of "real" democracy bypassing "formal" democracy. The relation of this ambiguity to the constitutive right of public sovereignty, alienates them more and more from the electorate or from sympathizers. Having ceased to advocate the dictatorship of the proletariat as real democracy, they are still not converted to the formal rules of the electoral transmission of power by popular will, as if there existed somewhere a philosophical compromise between lawfulness and its rejection. But their doctrinal concession frees enough political space so that an extreme left can appeal against them to the revolutionary purity of their common heritage. This takes the form typical of terrorist ideology: elections = treason.

In the works of the young Marx, one finds the classical form of the critique of formal democracy. The concept is elaborated on the model of the treatment of religion by Feuerbach. Just as for Feuerbach religion is man's imaginary projection of his real situation, and thus an alienation of his human nature, the egalitarian citizenry which constitutes the modern democratic state is a communal illusion of the man who is isolated, exploited and alienated by capitalist society. The only real social relation between men is the one which compels recognition of bourgeois economic society and its classes. The task of philosophy is to criticize the political illusion in the name of real society. In short, democracy and the democratic state are nothing but formal abstractions that the proletarian revolution must destroy in order to return man to himself by abolishing class relations and domination.

The idea that citizenship is a mask for the exploitation of the modern individual through the marketplace completes for Marx the liquidation of an entire metaphysics of the subject which had constituted the philosophical foundation of the principles of the French Revolution from Descartes to Rousseau and Kant. This infamous "subject" of reason, the universal form and bearer of rights, is nothing but a philosophical disguise for the private

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individual, alienated by capitalist exchange. But from that point on there is no longer any place for juridical abstraction. Legality is dissolved by fact, the democratic state by the inequality of wealth, the citizen by the proletariat, the law by what it conceals. Marx no longer poses the problem which preoccupied Kant, that of the juridical discontinuity which is inseparable from the concept of revolution. For if history does not carry the lawfulness that constitutes the relation between citizens and the State; if history is simply constituted by the dynamic and conflict of social forces; then revolution is not an unthinkable rupture, but rather the most natural form of history. Revolution is simply the rejection and overcoming of law. It operates, so to speak, in another dimension — the dimension of concrete reality and "facts." A social class which is the pure product of history replaces the abstraction of the state and its law as the representation of the universal.

Civil society is the reality of man's life in community. The legal State — the democratic even more than the monarchal — superimposes its unitary fiction in order to conceal class conflicts and produce the false consciousness that man has of his own history. But society itself produces the transformations and struggles which are critical for the march forward. Thus, Marx goes further than the de-juridification of the State. He demolishes the entire political arena constructed by European theory from Machievelli to Rousseau, via Hobbes and Montesquieu, in favor of the priority of the economic and the social dimensions. From this point on, he immerses himself in the modern history of England which offers an appropriate field for this reversal of perspectives. By contrast, he had difficulty interpreting the political instability of nineteenth century France. By making the State, at least in principle, a form narrowly subordinated to society, Marx extends potentially the field of military action to the struggle against the whole of capitalist society, its institutions and its men. If the State is nothing but the product and the mask of property relations, it is these relations which must be overthrown. If private power is the basis for public authority, then it is this private source of communal mystification which must be attacked.

There is, of course, an interpretation of Marxism where this struggle is hardly necessary. In the determinist version of Marxist doctrine the fall in the average rate of profit brings about the extinction of capitalism independently of human action. But Marxist terrorism in the second half of this century is, by definition, hostile to this interpretation. On the contrary, it is rooted in the voluntarist strain of the doctrine which is most systematically expressed by Bolshevism. The return to Lenin by theoriticians of direct action brings about a new paradox since the founder of Bolshevist Marxism had fought and liquidated (for reasons of circumstance) the Russian populist terrorist tradition.

In the Leninism constituted at the beginning of the century by a rupture with the Social Democrats, there are elements adopted from Marxism which could legitimate a political practice of direct action. These originate in the radical challenge to the democratic state and its legality. We have already seen

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this in Marx; but with Lenin it becomes a central dogma with the value of a strategic precept. Marx's critique of the modern State's communal illusion began from the social relations it covered over. Once he had dissolved its formal legality, he did not pay much attention to its varius historical forms. For example, absolutism appears in Marx as an equilibrating power between the nobility and the bourgeoisie. The modern democratic state which succeeds it definitely constitutes a progress for the freedom the the popular masses in relation to the Monarchy. Besides, under certain conditions, this State can become independent of the bourgeoisie, even though it is produced by it, as Marx explains in the *Eighteenth Brummaire* in regard to Napoléon III.

These good qualities disappear with Lenin. The problem for the founder of Bolshevism is to break with German Social Democratic reformism, particularly its integration into the Parlimentary Democracy of the Second Reich. Of his two most significant books in this regard, the first, *The State and Revolution*, written on the eve of 1917, develops a concept of the future State close to that of the anarchist by setting up the preliminary imperative of the destruction of the bourgeois state from top to bottom. The second, the famous polemic with Kautsky, was written after the Russian Revolution and amounts to Lenin's defense of the record. Here, he opposes the exclusive power of the Communist party, baptized dictatorship of the proletariat, to bourgeois democracy, which is the instrument of capitalist oppression of the working class. The State no longer has any reality *sui generis*; it is totally defined by the excercise of class violence. The liquidation of the autonomy of the juridical and political spheres initiated by Marxist philosophy paradoxically finds its most radical champion in a new founder of an empire. Since then, the Communist vulgate on the state has remained approximately where Lenin left it, a providential desert for simplifications of thought and action. It is equally easy for both Stalin and Baader to emerge in this context. From the moment the democratic parliamentary state is perceived only under the rubric of oppressive and unjust private interest, discussions of methods for overturning it concern only means, not disagreements in principle.

Is the instrument par excellence of this take over, namely the centralized party of activists invented by Lenin who have sworn their existence to the cause so different now in the second half of the century from the Red Brigades or the Red Army Fraction? In the commuist world, the party embodies knowledge of laws, history, and relations of power. Even when it is in power, it only fictively transforms force into law. In reality, its existence, which parallels the existence of the state and is superior to the state, sufficiently indicates that this grouping of militants, recruited by cooptation, replaces the traditional form of the national community and constitutes the reality of power. It follows that where there is a contradiction between the Constitution and the Party's decisions, one must believe and follow the Party. There is no philosophical difference between this conception of historical action and power and that of the ultra left contemporary terrorist. One is struck in reading the Italian and German texts by the extensive borrowing from the Leninist party:

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the same military reference, the same aristocratic conception of militant activity, the same compensatory obsession with the masses, the same scholastic of the "correct" strategy, and the same manicheanism of friend and foe. Because they are smaller, more isolated, and run more risks, terrorist groups employ still more exaggeration and invective than the communist parties. But they exaggerate the traits more than they deform them.

Finally, there is a third essential contribution of Leninism to this terrorist course: the theory of imperialism, which gives an international context to class struggle. This idea permits the union, at least in theory, of the ex-colonial world, the working class of the industrialized countries, and the countries of the Soviet bloc. But most important here is that world capitalism and the superpower that is its carrier (today the United States) is substituted for the national state as the central target. This completes the delegitimation of the democratic state by withdrawing from it both the right to represent the people and the reality of sovereignty. The German Federal Republic or the Italian Republic are no longer anything but the subjects of Uncle Sam. In Marx, the state is the agent of civil society; but it bears the communal illusion which is also a part of history, as the French Revolution demonstrates. In Lenin, the state is nothing more than the instrument of oppression of the masses by the propertied and bourgeois oligarchy, but it still retains its role as collective national actor. In post-Leninism, the state loses even this primordial sense, since it gives up its independence to the globalization of the capitalist economy. Here, the State stands completely naked, dejuridified, denationalized; it finally reveals the ultimate reality behind the abstraction of democracy: money.

This analysis clarifies several constituent elements of the paradox presented by contemporary German or Italian terrorism. The paradox is that of a practice generally linked to a pre-state stage of political action (as illustrated by the national movements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries) which now finds itself in an inverse situation. The terrorist of the Red Army Fraction or the Red Brigades does not mean to create a State, but to liquidate one. He does not seek to institute a nation but to destroy a society. In relation to his opposite numbers among the Basques or Palestinians, he situates himself at the far extreme of the history of the modern State. Though a product of democracy, he revives forms of political violence generally attributed to the absence of democracy which serves their excuse if not their justification.

This paradox is due to the fact the terrorist finds himself formally in relation to the modern democratic state in the relation that classical political philosophy defined as appropriate to tyrranicide. He is up against a closed sovereignty and a power which is unattackable in principle; it is necessary to substitute for it something "external" in order to break in. But the basis of this external element in the classical philosophy of power is that moral or divine law legitimates the death of the tyrant. This grounding does not exist in the current definition of democratic power which has nothing external to itself. Thus, one finds within democracy the reference which condemns it not as

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unjust or immoral, but as a contradiction with exactly its own essential principle. This "external element" concealed within democratic power is the exact opposite of what it claims to be; it is a secret corruptor, by nature unstoppable since it is the hidden truth. It is private interest hidden under the guise of something public, money under the guise of the community. This is the democratic version of tyrranicide; it is infinitely more powerful than the old version since here the modern State is stricken with a permanent curse. The tyrant is a bad king or a provisional usurper, but the power which comes from God remains sacred. The modern State is rotten in its principle, and yet it depends on this principle for survival. Hence, it is never redeemable and the violence necessary to overthrow it is absolutely endless because it must vanquish, terrorize and kill not a usurper or an unjust leader, but the very society whose interests constitute its hidden reality: bankers with judges, journalists with functionaries, industrialists with ministers.

To justify this vertigenous extension of the target, the Marxist-Leninist terrorist draws from Lenin to radicalize elements of the theory of the modern state that one can find in Marx. But in doing that, he also rediscovers older ideas, notably through constant recourse to imperialism and the internationalization of class struggle. The most important of these appears to be the principle of war, where a misappropriation of meaning blends with the revival of an old juridical concept in the terrorist notion of war.

The misappropriation of meaning involves the transfer of the word and its implication into class struggle. If capitalism has become not only a world economy but a single society and a single politics, elaborated and dictated by American monopolies, then European States, which are pure instruments of multinational corporations, are the stakes in a class struggle encompassing the entire planet. The classical distinction between civil struggles, where citizens of the same state community confront one another, and wars, where sovereign states are opposed, is eliminated in one blow. All humanity finds itself in an objective state of civil struggle — the people against imperialism — and, thus, in a state of permanent war.

No matter what its form of expression, one recognizes one theme consistant with leftist Marxist obedience in this type of analysis. This type of argument covers over the distinction between internal and international, between the State's maintenance of internal order and the violence practiced by a state on another state, or even — as in the case of colonism — on a population which does not have its own jurisdiction. The same theory which makes the modern state the product of a pure relation of mystification and force, also treats the relations it has with its citizens as natural to the international jungle. In fact, this is an inversion of Grotius' idea that the natural right of men is the source both of civil and international relations. For the terrorist, it is neither natural right nor simply right: there is only war everywhere, unifying the internal and international dimensions by its universal necessity — naked violence.

At the heart of this conception, universal war has the same character as civil war since it opposes nations, not classes. Its nature is not subordinated to

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political decision as in Clausewitz. it is itself political because it implies the identification of the military with the political and thus cannot end with the destruction of one of the two camps. The strategy of which the militant terrorist is a link in the chain makes an imaginary leap beyond contemporary nations to unify humanity by anticipation. Because it is universal power which is at stake, this leap permits him to re-constitute it in two antogonistic blocs which are plunged into total war.

This worldwide war also occurs within all capitalist states: it frees citizens from right and from the law. It authorizes, in advance, attacks against people as assassinations of enemies of the people. The only rule of a world without rules in this extended state of war reestablished behind the judicial sham of capitalism a field of pure force, indistinguishable from politics which takes its structure from that politics whose unique ground is war, since only military objectives realize the political goal. The party gives way to the army, the militant becomes a soldier, secret activity replaces public discussion and the rifle substitutes for electoral competition.

In thinking of war as a jungle-like state, the terrorist turns his back on Grotius, dissolves the idea of international law, and pushes bourgeois cynicism of a certain modern *Realpolitik* to an extreme. However, his action presents another slant where he does reintroduce Grotius and all his predecessors without knowing it. He finds himself engaged in this conflict without wanting or seeking it, because he simply found it as a state of the real world; he is the "good guy" and is on the right side; he carries on what classical doctrine calls a "just war" — defensive, hence inevitable and destined to establish one day a better order. The recourse to arms is not his initiative, but his adversaries'. If the Red Brigades resort to guerilla tactics, this is because the imperialists of the multi-nationals — the supreme stage of imperialism — first engaged in a preventative counter-revolution against their militants in an attempt to liquidate them. These militants have no choice but to counterattack on the same ground with the same methods. For the Red Army Fraction, the contemporary state has accrued such oppressive power that the political struggle against its domination has become directly military. If there is no longer a revolutionary politics except through recourse to arms, this is because all strategy is considered servile acceptance of totalitarian oppression. Thus, the militant terrorist finds in the risks he takes something better than the benediction of "science": he also reestablishes the values of individual morality.

The most recent of the Marxist parodoxes is the emergence of an aristocratic heroism of the revolutionary subject together with the idea of historical determinism. Badaar reconciles these two orders with great philosophical sophistication. The Italians play the detours carried out by Lukács and the Frankfurt School, remaining content with good old Cominternian Leninism based on the scientific gnosis of class relations and their consequences on a world scale. True, both rediscover in an aggravated form of latent contradiction in Marxism, which Bolshevism illustrated before them. But they carry it to the boiling point by the vanguard and somewhat desparate character they

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give to their activity. The Bolsheviks were already thought of as the vanguard of the proletariat. The terrorists retain this reference but, in addition, they give to it such an intransigent meaning that they also become sacrificial heroes. Behind their scholarly ideological constructions, they constantly permit the reemergence of a moral vision.

This moral tone is present because the gap between the terrorist version of Marxism-Leninism and reality, and because the degree of verisimilitude of their ideological prediction is so weak, it is militant engagement which most clearly manifests the gratuitous dimension of redemption of the real world by the actions of heroes. Science does not possess a similar power to seduce because it takes the place of morality, of the idea that the well-being of humanity depends on the individual actions of all. This morality is not rooted in religion or a formal Kantian ethics; it is founded on knowledge of the laws of history. This is a contradictory situation — for if history has laws, the individual no longer has any role in its course — yet it provides a powerful intellectual-affective mix, since it embellishes science with a moral investment, rediscovering once again the archaic in the contemporary. Marxist-Leninist terrorism in the second half of this century constitutes an exemplary form of the experience; no one knows whether it is the exhaustion of a culture or simply one of its episodes.

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GERMAN IRRATIONALISM DURING WEIMAR

by Burghard Schmidt

In *The Destruction of Reason*, Lukács considered the Weimar Republic an accomplice in the victory of fascism. Lukács has no monopoly on this thesis. The restorative ideological interests of the fifties portrayed Nazi Germany as an outbreak of irrationality, after which society returned to its rational routine lost at the end of the 1920s. Lukács view of the irrational as the ideological tool of fascist propaganda, of course, differs from this version. Yet, this difference is obscured by his method of simplification that led him to reject all irrationality. In addition Lukács described the development of the philosophy of irrationalism, in which bad conscience, doubt and uneasiness with this movement gradually decreased. Thus, following this trajectory, Schelling is not as bad as Dilthey, Dilthey not as bad as Nietzsche, Nietzsche not as bad as Simmel, Simmel not as bad as Scheler, Scheler not as bad as Spengler — not to mention Klages. Only Heidegger is left to display characteristic symptoms which are worthy of analysis. Beyond this, Lukács located the political shifts of different currents of irrationalism which allowed him to evaluate them. From Schelling to Kierkegaard, irrationalism had opposed bourgeois rationalist optimism. However, from Nietzsche to Klages and Junger the only enemy of irrationalism was the rationality of socialist optimism. Here Lukács once again drew a crude distinction and restricted Klages' irrational verve to the salon-pacifism of "beautiful souls" against all activist thought, both Right or Left wings.

This simplification, only occasionally interrupted, forced Lukács to almost unreservedly support rationality as such. He did not question the nature of this rationality, as if it had been Spengler and not Lukács himself who in *History and Class-Consciousness* had developed a socio-historical critique of the paradigm of modern reason embodied in the exact knowledge of nature. It does not make things any easier that Lukács, in his defense of rationalism, presupposed that the rationality of historical and dialectical materialism is immediately self-evident.

Current fears of irrationalism, though unrelated to Lukács' analysis, continue his simplistic defense of rationality by suppressing its historicity. Thus, although Habermas consistently dismisses Lukács' account, he retains an orthodox categorical imperative whereby any rationality is preferable to the incomprehensible dangers of the irrational. Surprisingly, although well-versed in the distinction between understanding and reason, Habermas is so afraid of irrationality that he can only dismiss it while unqualifiedly endorsing

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the prevailing rationality. This becomes clear in his discussion of the postmodern ideology of architecture. While seeking to understand the postmodernist objection to the "colonization of the life-world," he goes on to praise architecture theory's basic premise: "In modern architecture, at a fortunate moment, the aesthetic caprice of constructivism discovered and readily adopted the purposiveness of strict functionalism." Thus, he privileges the programmatic slogan "New Objectivity" over other 1920s movements. Similarly, Gert Selle also claims that the new objectivity of a classless culture of commodities is an essential contemporary achievement. The Utopian features associated in Bauhaus with the names Klee, Kandinskij, Feininger, and Walter Gropius, and which in De Stijl preserved the problem of an aesthetic metaphysics, turn out to be a reactionary Utopia when seen from a rationalist perspective. Today, however, we could learn much more from this tendency than from the rationalist reduction of aesthetics to everyday utility. Although Hannes Meyer has fizzled out into occasional glorifications of consumer-society and Mies van der Rohe has deteriorated to a rationality of silence, the early Bauhaus utopia of metaphysical unease remains anything but reactionary, along with the Utopian moments in constructivism. Here it breaks out of pragmatic functionality by blending functionalism with aesthetic formalization thus translating functionality into the structure of perception. Thus, critical possibilities develop against a reductive functionalism. Despite Habermas' hope of the perfectibility of the modern, a critique of modernity need not mean a rejection of modernity. By the same token, it is impossible to escape present irrationality merely by excluding it.

In the early twenties, Bloch joined Lukács in the critique of irrationalism. He summarized Lukács' theory of history in *History and Class Consciousness* in which the present was seen as the "moment of decision." The "darkness of the moment just now being lived" is the result of trying to focus on the most immediate present. Since experience thrives in the prospect of expectation or in the retrospect of remembering, the immediate presence remains dark — an unexperienced blind spot framed in by experience. While in retrospect experience is usually seen within particular structures, the obscurity of the present, if not tacitly recognized as impenetrable, requires a break with these structures. Bloch sought to express the break with these structures in terms of the inability to pose questions. This inability is motivated by an uneasiness with not asking at all which is a refusal to ask, a not-yet-asking. But this very inability to formulate questions of our experience allows us to develop intimations of its possibilities and lets experience gain new "form" that hovers in pre-appearance without taking on any solid shape.

The paradoxical joining of that which cannot be constructed with a new form can be resolved only in an *attempt* at formulation which is independent of any prior determination. In this sense, Lukács identified action as the process of penetrating into the darkness of immediacy. For the darkness of immediacy is the product of a reified experience, which bourgeois thought treats as simple reflexion. Action, in fact, mediates between life and experience as distinct

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moments, since experience means what is critical and anticipatory in life — the production and not the enjoyment of becoming alive and having lived. All these categories contain an irrational or voluntarist thread that clash with applied theory, the logical subordination of the particular under the general, etc.

Nevertheless, Bloch's and Lukács' outlook must not be confused with irrationalism which treats the irrational as the ultimate conclusion of wisdom. For them irrationality must be penetrated and overcome despite its impenetrability. In the 1920s Bloch and Lukács still agreed on the task of rationalizing the irrational, which means that they both took the irrationality of reality very seriously. Rationalizing the irrational was still proposed by Bloch in his *Erbschaft dieser Zeit* (1935), but it had doubious implications if understood independently of the distinction between understanding and reason. For then it would have entailed the basic position of modern rationality: to turn the irrational into reason, including the irrational ground of understanding, in order to render it less confusing within a "dialectic of enlightenment" in the sense of Horkheimer and Adorno.

This admonition is only a precaution. While Bloch and Lukács both took the irrational seriously, they drew completely different conclusions from it. Lukács saw the irrational mainly as bourgeois perplexity useful as a diversion against a possible socialist future, and which can be overcome by the rationality of the oppressed. Bloch, however, moves from the present to a future which must be determined by action. In this account, which resembles American pragmatism, accident and chance seem essential. While unpredictability is recognized, law-like features of history are not fully denied — although their applicability is restricted. Determinacy is thus a state of hovering that determines possibilities and requires subjectivity for its realization. This determining character avoids any confusion of the subjective factor with a transcendental subjectivity which produces a unity out of the multiplicity in the indetermined world. Foucault's critique of subjectivity is thus unconvincing here. Why should one speak of a given or self-producing subjectivity, which internalizes the extra-subjective and therefore reproduces the prevailing structure of domination? Bloch's subjective moment is different from Foucault's violent subjectivity. If the present requires a partisan decision instead of the enactment of a predetermined plan, then this decision would still be pure voluntarism if it did not depend on an anticipatory motivation. For a relative openness in history corresponds to the sovereignty that determines the state of emergency, and a voluntarist philosophy of the deed does not necessarily presuppose that everything is possible. Only a utopian outlook binds the voluntarist element to the possibilities of reason.

Despite all emphasis on the openness of history in *History and Class-Consciousness*, Lukács regarded history as the ultimate authority. Therefore, as early as the 1920s, he accused Bloch, who emphasized anticipatory motivations, of a utopianism that abandons historical materialism. He claimed that Bloch had a leftist ethics but a rightist epistemology. Despite all *good* will (the

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leftist ethic), Bloch's Utopian standpoint was ultimately allied with the irrationality of the will (the rightest epistemology) and not with the supra-subjective reason of history. Lukács' history therefore avoids any dialectic between reason and understanding, since the latter is based on historicity and not on the self-implementation of history whereby subjectivity saves the situation only by conspiring with supra-subjective reason. That is why Lukács cannot comprehend decay and decadance as revolutionary. He can see decay only as the precondition of another future. He responds to the cultural pessimism of irrationality with the nostalgia for the revolutionary ascendency of earlier classes.

In accord with Benjamin's concept of revolution, Bloch does not treat the discontinuous character of revolutionary leaps as merely momentary, but as the pre-formation of possible futures. Lukács' description of the preconditional status of decadence is replaced by Bloch's revolutionary standpoint as a form of history. Cultural pessimism does not generate only monstrosities, but also dreams that escape a theory obsessed with stabilities.

Bloch shares with Brecht this insight into the openness of conditions for action. Thus both of them work at the experimental figure of a utopia right in the middle of the critique of history. And both also take German irrationalism and American pragmatism much more seriously than does Lukács. Although Lukács does recognize irrationality as a real factor of history, he would like to abolish it. For Germany in the 1920s, Lukács is concerned with showing that completely different theories are related to fascist ideology, and then with condemning them. In contrast, what Bloch and Brecht seek in the irrationalisms of the twenties are not truth or falsehood, nor are they concerned with their ideological influence, but with the anticipatory motivations hidden in irrationalism and repressed by exclusionary rationalisms.

Bloch locates anticipatory motivations in "non-simultaneity" which blends with the Marxist position according to which every predominant economic formation is merely superimposed on the previous one and retains both. But while Marx foresees a clear predominance, Bloch analyzes and changes the fluctuating middle strata in order to clarify how non-simultaneity influences political struggles. These middle strata have not been eliminated. On the contrary, their ranks have repeatedly grown during structural changes. Non-simultaneity refers to a consciousness from the past which became obsolete but remains connected with a form of production which likewise protrudes out of an obsolete past. The non-simultaneous has accordingly not fallen behind the economic predicament of those who have this consciousness.

This leads to a further implication of Bloch's notion of non-simultaneity. Provincialism involves lack of access to information and innovation. Because of the mass-media, however, this is no longer as much of a problem as it was in the twenties. Thus, pure non-simultaneity has probably become inapplicable to Western industrial society. But the case for consciousness functioning on the basis of a historically outmoded stage characterized by obsolete structures of production is by no means refuted. As always, non-simultaneity involves

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the possibility of the ideological influence of irrationality. It must not be confused with irrationality. It is seen as irrationality from the viewpoint of the predominant type of simultaneous reality. Irrationality can be comprehended only in terms of the exclusionary character of a given type of rationality. If rationality was not exclusionary, then it would be meaningless to speak of irrationality. In this regard, the debate about myth is exemplary. Myth, which was once understood as a paradigm of the irrational, no longer needs to fear comparison with current scientific rationality. It is thus a question of making sense out of mythical metaphors, psychic expressions, natural impressions, which can hardly be evaluated in terms of reason and unreason.

If rationality is now blocking discussion of human possibilities then it becomes clear why Bloch ascribes to the irrational a possible anticipatory function. He labelled this the supra-simultaneity in non-simultaneity. In dealing with the history of ideology, he called the supra-simultaneity "the future of the past." Accordingly, irrationality can be described as a protest against the claims to domination of institutionalized rationality.

The case is different with irrationalism. This is the ideology that excludes all rationality, and operates outside all discussion with reason. But irrationalities must not be thrown out with the bath water of irrationalism. They can reinforce reason's arguments against the repressive mechanisms of simultaneous rationality with self-determining longings and intimations. If this connection with reason is not made, then propaganda can do anything it wishes with the longings and intimations denounced by rationalism. Bloch's non-simultaneity therefore helps explain the rise of Fascism. In the Weimar Republic, the fluctuating middle strata played a decisive role in the mass movements. These middle strata could not be reached by the rational simultaneity of the conflict between capital and labor, although they were entangled in it as much as anyone else.

As such, the Nazis did not win because irrationalism was not adequately fought. (If anything, this was done too much by the alliance of intellectuals and socialists.) By turning the rational into the irrational, the Nazis had instrumentalized even the anti-capitalist longings. The Left fell because it was unable to locate the anti-capitalist thrust of irrationalism. The Left was too infatuated with bourgeois rationality to oppose the non-bourgeois National Socialist pseudo-revolution. That is why, in *Erbschaft dierer Zeit*, Bloch argued that the Left should not be blamed for what it had done but, rather, for what it had *not* done. Of course, he meant the German Communists, who should have been wary of bourgeois rationality.

It could be argued that non-simultaneity played a significant role in the preparation for fascism, but that it became irrelevant without the vacillation of the middle strata. Yet, Bloch delivered a lecture in East Germany in 1955 on the "Differentiations in the Concept of Progress," where he extended worldwide the ineradicable non-simultaneity hanging over the vacillating middle strata in Western societies. The reference there is to the resistance of the "Third World" to economic, theoretical, and cultural imperialism. The "Third

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World" will not learn to produce on the basis of the European model thus excluding all other world traditions. Of course, this transfer of non-simultaneity to the "Third World" touches on the specifically bourgeois practice: controlled spaces are assigned to the repressed for their preservation. It is symptomatic of a lack of understanding combined with a passion for preserving everything: documentation, the archives, positivist history, and even the restoration of the "living past." This dialectics of non-simultaneity in the Third World must not be confused with conservationist tolerance toward others and strangers. Actually it is not unthinkable to extend non-simultaneity worldwide to an ideology of the division of labor in which the Third World retains in its own history, so that it can remain a mere producer of raw materials, as Krushchev had envisaged the division of labor under "real socialism:" Poland remains agrarian, East Germany takes on precision machine production, etc. This can be countered only by the *dialectic* of non-simultaneity, which has nothing to do with the preservation of non-simultaneity.

How differently are Bloch's analyses of Spengler, Klages, Heidegger, and Jaspers from those of Lukács. Consider the case of Spengler. Lukács' criticism focuses on Spengler's denigration of the scientific method. For Lukács, it boils down to Spengler's consistent playing off a "logic of time" against the "logic of space." If Spengler saw that the logic of time demands the replacement of mathematics as the foundation of science by analogy then, according to Lukács, Spengler's goal was the abolition of all causality, finality, and legality. "For by . . . rejecting causality and lawfulness, he treats them as valid only as the historical appearance of certain epochs, and denies them any relevance in the methodology of science and philosophy; by replacing causality with analogy, he plays with — often very superficially — similarities between research methods." Surprisingly, now Lukács uncritically invokes scientific laws as standards for a critique of a method of analogy, whose concern is not a free play of possibilities but rather the linkage of the analogical with biologized contexts of destiny which leads to the theoretical determination of progress. Interest in predicting lawful historical development thus criticizes interest in predicting history governed by destiny. This is a self-destructive critique.

Bloch, on the other hand, saw through Spengler's ideological thrust, down to the role which the idea of Russia plays in it. In the wake of the October Revolution, Spengler immediately dropped this idea when the Soviet Union turned toward Westernization. Nonetheless, Bloch saw Spengler's methodology as generating traits whose goals cannot be reduced to the ideology of the bureaucracy. These contradictions can be explained less with reference to Spengler's day-to-day politics than to Spengler's archaic discussion of history. Apart from Spengler's ideology, wild descriptiveness and analogizing characterize his attack on the law-like history of progress and on positivist historiography's institutionalized method of documenting the past. Bloch related Spengler's approach to Benjamin's shattering of history's continuum. Despite the critique of the spatialization of time, this allows the discovery of how

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Spengler's analogizing can generate a tentative sequence of intended relations.

In Spengler the description is used to break open accepted classifications and reductions to lawfulness, i.e., the wildness of description paves the way for the wildness of analogizing where whole strings of images are collapsed by removing everything incongruous. That is why Bloch's respect for the archaic Spengler was accompanied by intense suspicion. Thus, Bloch took seriously Spengler's concept of the future in the past. Adorno, on the other hand, in line with his own dialectic of enlightenment, attempted to look beyond the archaic Spengler whom he saw exhibiting a department-store character bent on quick sale and quick consumption. Therefore, Adorno considers the Spengler-case as unresolved, because the man had an extreme split sense of reality. First, concerning culture, Spengler defined the immediate future more adequately than rational optimists: "The forgotten Spengler is avenging himself: he may well be right. His doctrine is forgotten although his name is recalled: this gives the threat blind fatality. . . The most characteristic predictions deal with questions of mass-domination, propaganda, mass-art, and political forms of domination — in particular certain intrinsic tendencies of democracy to swing over into dictatorship. . . Spengler, who at the end of the epoch in a certain sense restores the position which Macchiavelli had occupied at its beginning, shows himself to be superior to the early-bourgeois philosophers of the state through the experience of historical dialectic, whose name he nowhere mentions."

The concentration of images that violate the historical process through the Spenglerian processes of analogy also coincide with real contemporary events: "In the grandoise masterful gesture of the Spenglerian choice of concepts, which plays with cultures like with colored stones and assigns destiny, cosmos, blood, spirit, in perfect indifference, this itself expresses the motif of domination. Whoever strips all phenomena to the bare formula 'everything already there before' commits a coercive regimentation of categories, all too closely related with the political one which aroused Spengler's enthusiasm. . . It contains an element of truth insofar as societies organized for domination repeatedly close ranks into totalities that leave the individual no freedom: totality is their logical form." Adorno seems really to be reproaching Spengler only for having believed his own prospective hope. The latter is in fact based on the present but formed by analogy to the past. Furthermore Spengler did not present it as a negative Utopia, as a warning against a possiblity that should not be though it was highly probable. The result is that Adorno's and even more Bloch's critique of irrationalism could lead to the conclusion that Lukács' "destruction of reason" is perfectly correct.

If Adorno and Bloch searched for the nonbourgeois in bourgeois consciousness, the truth in falsehood, they did so in the superstructure, from the culture-industry to high culture. With an anticipatory orientation, Benjamin ventured further, to the centers of Nazi-ideology itself, to the celebrations of

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the barbaric, the hatred of education, the poverty of experience, the contempt of progress, and the death-cult of absolute destruction.

What this is all about can be seen when, against the current wave of irrationalism, Habermas retreats to his rigid three-field classification of the rational order: the field of the truth of valid knowledge, guaranteeable through the democratic organization of discussion in scientific communities; the field of the correctness of action, guaranteeable through equal access of all classes; the field of the authenticity of productive expression (in art), guaranteeable through individual freedom in all modes of expression that do not concern truth and correctness. Was Habermas' three-field economy supposed to announce the return of the triad of liberty-equality-fraternity in the age of scientistic sociology or is it only the practical recourse to Kant's articulation of knowledge according to the criterion of the three critiques? Whatever the case, the three-field economy expresses a rational desire for separation because rationality has an inherent distrust for dialectics — otherwise it would not find it necessary to apply all its effort to distinguishing between cooperating forces. Paradoxical as it may sound, rationality, discipline, division of labor and the degradation of work are so interlocked that the attempt to distinguish them is itself confused.

For the French situation, it is significant how much the attack on causality, finality, law, and meaning in favor of description and a cautious, sceptical quest for correspondence, which permits only a stringing together of hoverings, gropings, and merely allusive analogies, seems to agree with Spengler's conception of historical method — despite all the new pride in scientifically valid positivist positions. This is true down to the style, which delights in series because presumably it expresses the allusive and sketchy which cannot be called to account before the court of precision; yet, rhetorically, seriality suggests accuracy. Even in the attempt to gain neutrality toward the subject/object separation, which Lukács unmasked in *The Destruction of Reason* as the "third way" between idealism and materialism, there are similarities with Foucault's justification of his theoretical method. Of course, there are differences, but the first noticeable one again points to the proximity of Foucault and Spengler: vehemently rejecting finality or teleology, both attack the teleological notion of "world history," though of course for the sake of another notion: the beginning of a great disintegration does not give up on history, the retreat to a relativized finality begins. Totalized finality is broken to make way for a second, "wild" finality. This crystallizes in Spengler in the windowless monad of cultural circles, and in the plant-paradigm; in Foucault it is expressed in the structure and in the paradigm of discourse.

It is surprising that such similar results follow from opposite points of departure. This similarity becomes clear if Foucault is seen from the perspective of the new French irrationalism as suggested by the "new philosophers." This irrationalism, according to its own justification, originated from strict anti-subjectivism, intensified to strict anti-authority. The old German irrationalism, on the other hand, placed particular stress on interiority against the

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allegedly insubstantial exteriority of rationality. Superficial grounding of their similarity might be due to the fact that present-day irrationalism must answer the challenge of a rationalism proud of the restoration of capitalism after WWII and its success at crisis management. Similarly, the transition in the ideology of architecture from functionalism to structuralism intensifies the complexity of the functional as compared with classical functionalism and yet appears naive. Thus, post-modernism can attempt to relate to structuralism in the effort to avoid the fall into expressionism or into historicism. Foucault, it must be added, cannot be identified with either example. But insofar as irrationalism is today compelled to deal more familiarly with rationalism, irrationalism also gestates in Foucault. Thus, it becomes necessary to stress the difference between Foucault and Spengler. Of course, Foucault deos not agree with Spengler's necessity of fate and the biologistic circle of growth. On the contrary, he sides with all resistances to the obvious course of things and thus displays the engagement which Adorno found lacking in Spengler. Yet, Foucault's insistence on the tremendous power of fact corresponds to Spengler's necessity of fate. This Spenglerian feature, no doubt, led France's irrationalist "new philosophers" to embrace Foucault, even though, like him, they do not accept the Spenglerian view of the barbarizing effect of civilization.

The new irrationalism must be taken as seriously as the old one, because it too endorses social appearance against the reductive concern with essences indifferent to the particular. And the new irrationalism, like the old, is connected with society's non-simultaneity, which still determines social structure, and which simultaneous rationality would like to repress. This is not changed by the anti-subjectivism of Foucault's irrational since, for him, subjectivity is the cause of disciplined organization.

As Negt metaphorically put it, it is not gold, but Wotan which is the problem for the new French irrationalists. By this he means that they constantly ignore the repeatedly restored power of the productivist basis of power relations: "Production is not the principle of history, but power and force." Yet Negt, schooled in Bloch's non-simultaneity, maintains the importance of this irrationalism for critical theory. In a reversal of anti-subjectivism into the problem of subjectivity, Negt writes about the irrationalism of France's "new philosophers": "Less through what they say than through what they express by their mode of existence, the New Philosophers point to the central problem of the renewal of Marxism; it has to do with the so-called subjective factor, which is still present like a ghost appearing in various forms: as Utopia, spontaneism, anarchism, needs, etc. The windmill-struggle of formal orthodoxy against this ghost has not yet ended. It is not disquieting how many intellectuals who have been orthodox Marxists for decades are suddenly turning their backs on Marxism and becoming Christians, positivists, macro-biotists? And that is just the tip of the iceberg. There is a form of Marxism that generates anti-Marxist emotions in those who have run through such lifeless

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schooling enterprises. This cannot be eliminated by a magic formula and not from one day to the next."

The problem with subjectivity, however, has not been internally solved by irrationalism either. Still, as far as its French mode is concerned, the paradox remains that under the flag of irrationalism, the tone is reminiscent of an ultra-cautious rationalism of 1950's Germany. It involves the attack on the master-thinkers, which amounts to the resumption of the Popperian attack on the "false prophets" and the characterization of Marxism as an unsuccessful secularization of myth, religion, and world-view. Are those similarities based on the same political function, so that the opposition of irrationalism and rationalism becomes irrelevant? Is the goal to sharply cut Social Democracy off from any contact with Communism and thus giving it a monopoly on all opposition? That would explain why, despite their opposed valencies, German critical rationalism's (Popper) critique of the "false prophets"and the French new philosophers critique of the "master thinkers" meet at the point of intersection of neo-irrationalist perspectives in favor of Social Democracy.

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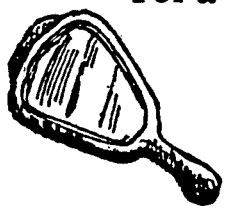

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CORPORATISM AS MACRO-STRUCTURING*

by Claus Offe

A frayed theoretical discussion has been taking place in most Common Market countries since the mid-1970s,[1] and it has been followed by large-scale empirical research.[2] These studies demonstrate the unforeseen importance of socio-political formations which cannot be comprehended by frameworks based on constitutional law and its understanding of a sound political order. On the contrary, standard constitutional accounts often treat these formations as relics of pre-modern regimes.[3] In fact, however, corporatist arrangements envision socio-political controls not anticipated by the constitutional state. There is an unofficial interaction between associations and interest groups on the one hand, and the government and parties on the other.[4] This has important ramifications for political theory and especially for the conceptualization of democracy.

Large social organizations based on a state-recognized monopoly and on voluntary membership need not be controlled by those members. They not only speak for their members but also carry out governmental and administrative functions toward them by taking over regulatory roles in technical areas (economics, income, education, and social policy). Their increased presence in Sweden, Austria and West Germany has been noted apprehensively from widely differing political perspectives. One cause for alarm is that the state's representative and executive authorities have surrendered some of their authority and jurisdiction to structures which, though nominally only interest groups, have assumed the status of unaccountable "private governments." Another cause for alarm, especially for the Left, are the dangers connected with the unions' acceptance of responsibility for regulation of their rank and file. Such a transformation of unions into disciplining, para-

*Translated by David J. Parent.

1. Cf. P.C. Schmitter and G. Lehmbruch, eds. *Trends toward Corporatist Intermediation* (Beverly Hills, 1979); G. Lembruch and P.C. Schmitter, eds. *Patterns of Corportist Policy-Making* (Beverly Hills, 1982); and U.V. Alemann, ed. *Neokorporatism* (Frankfurt, 1981).

2. Cf. W. Streeck and P.C. Schmitter, *The Organization of Business Interests. A Research Design to Study the Associative Action of Business in the Advanced Industrial Societies of Western Europe* (Berlin, 1981), as a project sponsored by the Volkswagen Foundation and including nine German Market countries.

3. On the history of ideas and the constitutional history of corporatism, see C. Mayer-Tasch, *Korporatism und Autoritarismus. Eine Studie zu Theorie und Praxis der berufständischen Rechts und Staatsidee* (Frankfurt, 1971).

4. So also E.W. Böckenförde, "Die politische Funktion wirtschaftlich-sozialer Verbände und Interessenträger in der sozialstaatlichen Demokratie," in *Der Staat* 15 (1976) pp. 457-483.

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governmental agencies can be seen as the essence of corporatist policy — especially when unions enter "tripartite" negotiation systems with employers and government. Such negotiations are often hidden from the public and immune to the threat of strikes.[5]

While much of the literature on corporatism is full of attempts to expose such dangers, there are also examples of the opposite perspective where para-governmental regulations are treated as promising prospects. They enable industrial societies to achieve strategic management beyond the blocked channels of spontaneous market adaptation or government intervention.[6] The following discussion draws from both the reservations and the hopes for managerial advantages through corporatist arrangements.

Market, State, and Solidarity

All social systems must solve the problem of mediating between actors' *behavioral strategies* and the system's *conditions of existence*. Solutions to this fundamental problem have been sought repeatedly from clasical political economy to formal models of game-theory. The two dimensions of this problem — efficiency of action and system-rationality — can each be dichotomized: actors can act either efficiently or inefficiently in terms of interests, and in the process either "rational" or "irrational" macro-results can follow. The combination of these two dimensions leads to a simple four-field scheme:

State of the system / rationality of action	"rational"	"irrational"
efficiency for interests	market theories 1	collective goods produced by the state 2
/inefficiency/	collective goods through solidarity 3	anomie- and crisis-theories 4

5. Cf. Panutch, "The Development of Corporatism in Liberal Democracies," in *Comparative Political Studies* 10 (1977) p. 61-90 (also in Schmitter and Lehmbruch); and "Recent Theorizations of Corporatism: Reflections on a Growth Industry," in *British Journal of Sociology* (1980) pp. 159-187.

6. For variations of this position see W. Streeck, "Interessenverbände als Hindernisse und Vollzugsträger öffentlicher Politik," in F.W. Scharpf and M. Brockmann, eds. *Institutionelle Bedingungen der Arbeitsmarkt- und Beschaftigungs-politik* (Frankfurt, 1983) pp. 179-198; H. Willke, *Entzauberung des Staates. Uberlegungen zu einer sozietalen Steuerungstheorie* (Frankfurt, 1983); H.E. Ritter, "Der kooperative Staat. Bemerkungen zum Verhältnis von Staat und Wirtschaft," in *Archiv des Offentlichen Rechts* 104 (1979) pp. 389-413.

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Field 1 cases are described by market theories. It is a question of the fortunate but improbable cases in which the pragmatic pursuit of interests leads, as if guided by an "invisible hand," to a state of balance of the system. Field 2 cases are described, for instance, by the "prisoner's dilemma."[7] Here, effective pursuit of interests leads to imbalances and suboptimal conditions within the system. Mancur Olson[8] has explained how, under certain premises, collective goods (i.e., products enjoyed by persons other than those who have paid for them) "*could*" be produced, but *are not* when all participants pursue their own interests. Each will "let the other pay," and so, (except for a "very small" group) no one will. In this extreme case, the system of action collapses due to the "rational" refusal of its members to finance the system. According to Olson, a solution is only possible when there is an authority that either penalizes "free-loading" (e.g., mandatory insurance) or rewards collaboration in the production of collective goods by granting other ("selective") goods (e.g., services an organization makes available only to paying members).

In both cases the actors efficiently pursue their own interests, but the dilemma of Field 2 is controlled by the intervention of governmental or organizational sovereignty to impose penalties or to provide incentives whose presence modifies the actors' preferences and costs. Domination bridges the discrepancy between micro-rationality and macro-irrationality. A mirror-image to this solution can be found in the discrepancy foreseen in Field 3. Here we are dealing with desirable and rational aggregate results which occur when actors renounce acting according to standards of interest-rationality, i.e., through the counterbalancing of costs and benefits that maximize individual preferences. Their interest-rationality is no longer controlled by any sovereign authority (as in Field 2), but is suspended. A solution is reached only when they orient themselves by norms such as solidarity, responsibility, etc., and act for the "common good," without calculating the resulting sacrifices as such.[9] Following Tönnies and Weber,[10] social structures which generate these practices can be called "communities." Field 4 of the diagram is uninteresting here. It involves cases — described, for instances, in theories of "anomie" or of "mass society" — in which the rationality of action is suspended *and* — as described in theories of crisis — systemic balance conditions are not achieved.

The theory derivable from this table of management problems and solutions can be summed up as follows: when market processes do not suffice, solutions can be reached only when either costs, preferences, and usefulness

7. B. Barry and R. Hardin, eds. *Rational Man and Irrational Society?* (London, 1982).
8. M. Olson, Jr., *The Logic of Collective Action, Public Goods and the Theory of Groups* (New York, 1968).
9. An original theory of the transformation of "private" into "public involvements" is presented by A. Hirschmann, *Shifting Involvements* (Princeton, 1982).
10. Cf. the article by myself in G. Vobruba, ed. *Wir sitzen alle in einem Boot. Gemeinschaftsrhetorik in der Krise* (Frankfurt, 1983); also Chapters IV and V of my *Politik mit dem Wohlfahrtsstaat* (Frankfurt, 1983).

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can be regulated by a regime able to impose incentives and penalties, *or* when the pursuit of interests is neutralized by the power of "communities." Field 1 is an orthodox, "supply-side" recuperation strategy that relies on the self-healing process of the *market*, while Field 2 corresponds to a theory of the Keynesian welfare state.[11] By means of framework planning, investments programs, and active employment policy, it encourages attempts to place private pursuit of interests under parameters defined and implemented by the state and to produce values desirable for systemic equilibrium. Finally Field 3 locates the stategy, less developed than the others, of using non-governmental social groups for bringing about certain desirable macro-conditions.

Constructive Solutions and Their Obstacles

The triad — market, bureaucratic regulation, communal self-obligation — seems to exhaust the means available to complex societies for easing the tense relation between the individual rationality of actor and the collective rationality of the system.[12] Of course, all observable cases display a mixture of these principles. But certain political positions privilege one pole of this triad when new regulatory problems arise. In the early 80s the main trend was not exactly toward the "government control" end of the scale.[13] In fact, such control seems to have run its course.[14] The main cause of this has been the crisis of public budgets, limiting the scope both of Keynesian policies and of welfare-state redistribution. Another cause may be the discrepancy between the limited jurisdiction of national (or even supra-national) governmental power and the global reach of investors. Thirdly, government regulations often limp behind problems, failing to solve them due to lack of adequate knowledge. Notwithstanding the ubiquity of complaints about "excessive government" today, there are also delays in program developments and legislative processes as well as short life-spans of some government regulations which immediately need revision and amendment. Such records of ineptness are politically exploited and they provide ammunition for those demanding alternatives to bureaucratic regulations.[15]

But supporters of a "stronger market economy" must realize that this switch is a "step backward." They underestimate the "ratchet-effect," locked into place in the transition from an unregulated market economy to the mature Keynesian state. The return to a market economy is not the retraction of an allegedly hypertrophied statist politics, but itself a hypertrophy — a massive and disruptive political intervention. Even if the call for "more market" were theoretically convincing (which it is not), it would still remain

11. Cf. C. Offe, "Competitive Party Democracy and the Keynesian Welfare State: Factors of Stability and Disorganization" in *Policy Sciences* 15 (1983) pp. 225-246.
12. Cf. also C.E. Lindblom, *Politics and Markets* (New York, 1977).
13. Cf. Streeck, *Interessenverbände, op. cit.*
14. N. Luhmann, *Politische Theorie im Wohlfahrtsstaat* (Munich, 1981).
15. Cf. R. Voigt, ed. *Verrechtlichung: Analysen zur Funktion und Wirkung von Parlamentarisierung, Bürokratisierung und Justizialisierung sozialer, politischer und ökonomischer Prozesse* (Königstein, 1980) and various volumes of the *Jahrbuch für Rechtssoziologie*.

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static, not dynamic.[16] For the road back to the "rationality" of the open market is blocked by various restrictions. Even harsh critics of the governmental model of problem-solving have therefore warned about simplistic plans to return to a *status quo ante*.[17]

These difficulties naturally draw attention to the remaining alternative, the "communal" one. The problem here is to institutionalize a type of behavior that recognizes that it is in one's best interest not to rank one's interests above all others.' This solution would spring from the principles of responsibility, moderation, partnership, and trust — which are hardly dictated by the rationality of individual economic interests *alone*. At first this goal seems far-fetched, contradicting the nature of complex societies. However, the possibility of corporatist arrangements lies precisely in this astonishing perspective. From this perspective, social theory must reexamine the "anomic" tendencies[18] discussed by Durkheim,[19] while returning to certain elements of Hegel's philosophy of right.[20] Today's problems of political order can be aptly formulated in terms of Hegel's "corporation": "restriction of the so-called *natural law* from carrying out its function of acquiring whatever can be acquired as it calls for reasonableness in this pursuit; namely, liberated, recognized and protected from one's own opinion and the accidentality of one's danger as well as of the danger to others, and at the same time elevated to conscious activity for a common purpose." Durkheim's program for institutionalizing occupational groups as intermediate authority is quite similar: "A nation can be preserved only when a whole series of secondary groups is interposed between the state and the citizen, groups sufficiently close to the individuals to receive them into their range of activity and to carry them along in the general stream of social life."[21]

Recent reflections and recommendations on regulatory theory also stress intermediary responsibility and cooperation.[22] For Willke, the "paradox of an ever more perfect rationalization and rationality of social parts and of an ever less overseeable irrationality of the whole" (10) can supposedly be overcome by giving up the "integrative primacy of the state" (56) via decentralized macro-management. Within this framework, actors are expected to display "mutual consideration for the respective existence conditions of other parties" (129) and to honor the obligation "of governmental and non-govern-

16. This could be easily demonstrated, e.g., in the socio-political innovations proposed in M. Miegel, *Die verkannte Revolution (1) Einkommen und Vermögen der privaten Hauschalte* (Stuttgart, 1983).

17. Cf. Luhmann, *op. cit.*, p. 152: It must be "considered also that there are social-structural causes for the excessive self-demands of the political system."

18. H.P. Müller, *Wertkrise und Gesellschaftsreform. Emile Durkheims Schriften zur Politik* (Stuttgart, 1983).

19. E. Durkheim, *The Division of Labour in Society* (New York, 1964).

20. Cf. pp. 250-256 of G.W.F. Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts*, ed. Hoffmeister, and the critique of attempts at "class" harmonization of the "situation of the modern state," which is quite relevant for the context of the corporatism-discussion, in Karl Marx, "Kritik des Hegelschen Staatsrechtrs," in: *Marx-Engels-Werke*, Vol. 1 (Berlin, 1961) pp. 201-333.

21. Quoted in Müller, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

22. Willke, *Entzauberung; op. cit.* The following page-numbers in brackets refer to this book.

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mental agencies to mutual consultation" (130). However, the problem remains that these postulated gains in rationality cannot be guaranteed, nor can one be sure that the corresponding style of interaction "will be reflected in actual practice" (134). All this leads to the question of which preconditions will promote adeptness at this self-"restricting" that is "destined to rationality." Willke identifies the problem himself: "Why should the parties to wage-and-price negotiations voluntarily expose themselves to this coercion?" (130)

Decentralized macro-regulation through big organizations, acting responsibly toward systemic integration, depends upon the internal structure of these organizations as well as their relation to one another. Internal structural preconditions for "responsibility" and systemic "context-sensitivity" are linked to the variables size, solidarity, and organizational accountability of these organizations. "Big" organizations, with a comprehensive social, technical, and temporal field of authority and operation, may be more responsive than others, since they can more easily be forced to reflect on the consequences of their actions. With increasing size, "externalities" become internalized.[23] But this can take place only under certain conditions.[24] For instance, the demand, supported and won by both labor and management, for subsidies to declining economic sectors, protectionism, technological innovations with long-range burdens and risk, etc. illustrate a constellation in which, despite increased mutual consideration, an enlarged system rationality is not guaranteed. The learning effect would in such cases be restricted to constituting, in a thoroughly "cooperative" and creative way, those "third parties" at whose expense a range of agreement can be opened up. One can even suggest that "big" organizations (e.g., according to the pattern of branch-cartels) can better control this range of agreement due to the correspondingly more copious internal and external resources at their disposal than can "small" ones, and that nonetheless, "bigness" is related ambiguously to "responsibility."

A second precondition for harmony between the objectives of a particular association and the commonwealth is the presence of solidarity norms within social associations. Only when these norms exist can such organizations cooperate in socio-political regulation, even though violations of the members' interest-rationality may occur. The decisive question is whether the organization can rely on its members' support by appealing to norms of class and professional ethics. If it cannot do so, an erosion of interest rationality has begun, and the members react negatively to the "tutelage" and "unreasonable demands" of their leadership. A test-case would be the reaction of craft unions to the shortage of apprenticeship positions, due in part to government policy. Do they admonish their members about the duties and responsibilities of professional training, or will they yield to selfish economic calculations; and do the corresponding discussions within the union pay off? The

23. Cf. M. Olson, Jr., *The Rise and Decline of Nations* (New Haven, 1982).

24. The same finding in H. Wiesenthal, *Die Konzertierte Aktion im Gesundheitswesen. Ein Beispiel für Theorie und Politik des modernen Korporatismus* (Frankfurt, 1981).

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first alternative will come about only if each union-member, through a code of professional-class solidarity and reciprocity, can count on not being left alone to experience sacrifice. Such a situation might hold in crafts unions, suggesting that a moral infrastructure restricting instrumental behavior may meet with more success than in economic areas less subject to modernizing and rationalizing processes, while in others class solidarity might lose out to commercial rationality. This highlights a contradiction within "bigness." For it is precisely large organizations that, due to their internal heterogeneity, lack the ability to foster a "culture of reciprocity" and to activate it when needed.

A third internal, structural precondition for the capacity of social organizations to cooperate as corporate agents within a new type of macro-social regulation, consists in their internal obligatory capacity, i.e., their success in binding their members to strategic positions toward the state or other groups so that agreements hold even if they conflict with some of the members' particular interests. "Big" organizations which cannot rely on their members in this way act like quasi-governments, establishing rules for conformity and applying sanctions against deviation. But this can succeed only when the status of "group-citizen" (which is by nature voluntary) is sufficiently attractive to compensate for the restrictions and obligations connected with it. The more comprehensive the regulatory authority of the corporate arrangements, the more encompassing must be their capacity to instill internal obligation, in social, technical, and temporal terms.

Three facts, or rather theses, problematize these pre-conditions. First, there is much evidence that this obligation capacity is unequally present among the wage-and-price partners. It is far greater on the side of the unions.[25] Equalizing this capacity could only be done through "governmentalization" of the business associations by means of compulsory membership. Thus the problem would revert to governmental regulation, which was what was to be avoided by the decentralized, autonomous self-regulation. Finally, particularly regarding employers, it can be seen that (as with the pattern of "negative" coordination or "neglect" of potential conflict) a large social area of activity and representation can be maintained only at the price of a shrinking *objective* dimension. The organization does speak for many, but (to avoid internal disputes) not about everything; it is bound for internal reasons to vetoes and defensive positions, lists of taboos, etc., which hardly recommend it as an actor within "decentralized societal macrosteering" (Willke).

Thus, if large organizations, in negotiations with one another and the state, are to promote higher systemic interests that may conflict with their immediate interests, they must be able to draw on the confidence and loyalty of their members. Otherwise they would jeopardize their own existence. Trust must also exist among the members themselves, or at least there must be firm

25. Cf. Offe and Wiesenthal, "Two Logics of Collective Action: Theoretical Notes on Special Class and Organizational Form," in *Political Power and Social Theory* 1 (1980) pp. 67-113; as well as C. Offe, "The Attribution of Public Status to Interest Groups. Observations on the West German Case," in S. Berger, ed. *Organizing Interests in Western Europe: Pluralism, Corporatism, and the Transformation of Politics* (Cambridge, 1981).

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confidence in the group's ability to discipline deviation. This guarantees each member's "responsibility." Otherwise the loss incurred by renouncing strategies for achieving one's own interests would be intolerably magnified. The sense of community that strategic associations are supposed to practice among one another and towards the state depends on their ability to impose burdens based on an ethic of solidarity and responsibility. There is hardly any solid sociological data or theory concerning how such collective normative cohesive forces operate under stress. In all events, these features of today's political environment cast doubt on Durkheim's idea of an overall solidarity shaped by professional-class group solidarities.[26]

Grounds for skepticism become even greater in light of the *external* limits to a decentralized macro-management functioning according to a corportist model. On the positive side, there is the argument — and field research confirms this — that there is in West Germany a large coalition of technicians, consisting of the leadership-groups of the corporative associations and the government bureaucrats. They develop compromise strategies based on their similar training, personal friendship, mutual respect, and identical stock of knowledge,[27] and they are also far enough removed from the grass-roots of their associations (or from parliamentary or party-political control), to deal constructively with one another, out of the public gaze. They develop a certain empathy for the "essentials" of the opposite party. Of course, such networks are delicate and can be abruptly blocked by insults, indiscretions, scandals, spectacular court disputes, or a change of generation. But another point is probably more important.

Cooperative efforts to find a solution for macro-problems will come about more readily in the triad of government, unions, and business, the more these actors are jointly affected by unsolved systematic problems. *All* of them must be sitting "in the same boat." This condition, however, is *not* true in regard to labor-market, employment and social-policy concerns for business, which has nevertheless raised the metaphor of the boat in which we are all sitting to the level of an organizational philosophy. There is no reason for employers to be interested in a stable, high level of employment. Nor must persistent mass

26. Cf. Durkheim, *op. cit.*, p. 360: "The government cannot, at every instant, regulate the conditions of the different economic markets, fixing the prices of their commodities and services, or keeping production within the bounds of consumer needs, etc. All these practical problems arise from a multitude of detail . . . which only those very close to the problems know about. Thus, we cannot adjust these functions to one another and make them concur harmoniously if they do not concur of themselves . . . . What gives unity to organized societies . . . is the spontaneous consensus of parts. Such is the internal solidarity which not only is as indispensible as the regulative action of higher centers, but which also is their necessary condition, for they do no more than translate it into another language and, so to speak, consecrate it. Thus, the brain does not make the unity of the organism, but expresses and completes it . . . . The parts must be already interdependent with one another for the whole to become aware of itself and react in this way. Otherwise, as work is divided, one would see a sort of progressive decomposition produced, not only at certain points, but throughout the society, instead of the ever stronger concentration that we really observe."

27. Cf. an excellent study of the mode of functioning of Austrian social-partnership in *Die paritatische Kommission. Aufgeklarter Technokorporatism in Osterreich* (Vienna, 1982).

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unemployment, along with its consequences for the welfare-state, represent a systematic problem for the employers' sense of responsibility. Actually, high unemployment leads to increased labor productivity, more moderate wage demands, and strict priorities in economic policies conducive to investments.[28] Apart from vague and unfounded fears that the entire political-economic system might be questioned, the employers have no reason to take the problem of persistent unemployment seriously as a "systemic problem." Instead, they treat it as a problem for labor which, from the viewpoint of their own collective interests, is not completely unwelcome. From this perspective, the problem of employment and social policy sinks to the level of a secondary concern which can be solved only indirectly through an increase in economic growth. This is the most important sign of a highly unequal distribution of social classes' and groups' "sensitivity" to systemic problems which are by no means self-evident as such. This suggests that the effective range of corporative "decentralized macro-management" objectively will continue to be reduced to what all of the participating parties are actually ready to accept as a systemic problem.

A further reservation is connected with class structure. It has to do with the asymmetrical capacity for enforcing obligations on the sides of labor and capital associations.[29] If the corporatist approach to macro-problems is modeled on an equal exchange in which two or more parties mutually obligate themselves to maintain the system by accepting certain sacrifices, then the realization of this exchange depends on the reciprocal certainty that each party will "make its contribution." Without this mututal certainty, there is a risk that one's party will have sacrificed alone. This is motive enough to consider one's own sacrifice senseless and unacceptable. Yet, this is the problem that arises for issues like income and employment policy: the equality cannot be guaranteed either theoretically or morally.

Likewise, whether or not the sacrifices on the one side (e.g., in the form of "responsible" and moderate wage-demands) will be honored by the other side (e.g., in the form of additional employment or the control of rising prices) cannot be assured institutionally.[30] The investment, employment, and pricing decisions of firms are the business of *organizations* that have no mandate to negotiate, because such matters are private, autonomous and market-regulated. Nothing and no one therefore can guarantee that the bargain will be kept. Indeed, in any such game the player who sticks to the rules longer than the others, loses. The risk of being the only party to sacrifice an interest must be next to nothing if such a game is to take place at all. It will certainly not be entered upon if instead of immediate recognizable sacrifices on the part of

28. Cf. C. Offe. "Perspektiven auf die Zukunft des Arbeitsmarktes," in *Merkur* (1983) pp. 489-504.

29. Cf. Offe and Wiesenthal, *op. cit.*

30. What internal organizational tensions ensue for the unions from a lack of reciprocity is discussed on the basis of the example of Italy in M. Regini, "Gewerkschaftliche Klassenpolitik und die Repräsentationskrise der Arbeitnehmerorganisation," in *Leviathan* 10 (1982) p. 376-391.

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the other side, reciprocation is to take place only after a long time or if the situation merely involves their avoiding increased sacrifices. The latter is true if the employers take credit for a stable employment situation because it had not worsened without recognizing the identical fact that it had also not improved. A loss that fails to materialize is no gain. Hence, this argument would not provide sufficient motivation to continue the game.

These considerations already touch on the issue of the framework conditions for regulation based on corporatist negotiation systems. As long as it seems that a sense of community and responsibility "pays" in practice in ways which, even though they cannot be calculated in advance, are quite plausible after the fact so that systemic and individual solutions are both involved, the management system will feed off the positive experiences that it constantly produces. The opposite would be foreseeable under conditions of a negative-sum game, such as persistent growth-crises. The readiness to act responsibly and keep in mind the criteria of systemic balance then would lose the protective layers of its self-seeking rationality. It would become less reliable in both its internal relation and in the relation between associations. This would lead to a paradoxical outcome. Corporatist voting mechanisms would decline, yielding to the pluralistic interest-policy strategies of organizations, precisely when the rationality of such voting mechanisms would be more urgently needed to get systemic crises under control. The possibility of such a paradox is underestimated by functionalist lines of argument. They mistakenly assume that political arrangements, whose technical or managerial superiority can be postulated from sound empirical and theoretical arguments, are accepted and followed as norms of behavior by the participating collective and individual actors.[31]

The simple functionality of the corporatist pattern of management will be less able to assure reciprocal responses. There is no formal guarantee that the merely *de facto* web of existing relations of exchange, communication, and cooperation has a permanent institutional character that will continue to serve as the basis of negotiation from one round of negotiations to the next. Customary rules can be abolished tomorrow for the advantage of the one who "gets out" first. What should prevent him from doing so? Essentially, two weak but empirically plausible answers can be given to this question. First, a strong Social Democratic hegemony actually goes hand in hand with the relative stability of corporatist problem-solving procedures in the countries in question (Austria, West Germany, Sweden, Norway, the Netherlands, in part also Great Britain).[32] In this context, the risks connected with partnership strategies on the employee's side can be backed up, if necessary, by policies of the Social Democratic administration, keeping them within tolerable bounds. But this answer shifts the problem to the continuity of such a hegemony.

31. Cf. my commentary on the corresponding remarks by W. Streeck, *Interessenverbande, op. cit.*, p. 199-206.

32. Cf. M. Schmidt. "Does Corporatism matter? Economic Crisis, Politics and Rates of Unemployment in Capitalist Democracies in the 1970s" in Lehmbruch and Schmitter, *op. cit.*

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Second, the plausible threat of government interventions hangs over the negotiations as the "second-best" solution for all parties. Hence, as a Democles' sword or as "the stick instead of the carrot,"[33] it exerts pressure on the potentially affected corporate agents to cooperate and to come to terms. Developments in job-training and environmental-protection policy can be given as examples of this option. This idea, however, points only to the difficulty of the initiation of negotiations. How long such a threat can remain effective, when the instruments of government intervention are always kept in reserve, turn rusty from lack of use, and are no longer taken seriously by the participants, is a problem that must be avoided.

Council-Capitalism?

The functionalist argument that the corporative structures of decentralized macro-management are technically the most adequate solution for the failure of the market *and* the state leaves the normative content of such structures completely in the dark. Simply because a design might *function* satisfactorily is not an adequate reason in itself for considering it *desirable* or adopting and retaining it permanently. Of course, one can reject democratic claims regarding the priority of territorial over functional representation, and the higher legitimacy of regulation by a sovereign government compared with corporative self-regulation, as completely bankrupt and normatively obsolete. One can even admire the ruse whereby a system jettisons its own constitutive norms as soon as they have become technically disfunctional. "If the loss of function of parliaments has long been obvious and accepted by a more or less admitted collusion between administration and top organizations," then not surprisingly "supplementary institutions of interest-mediation, consensus-formation, and system-integration" are beginning to develop. It can be asked, however, which normative aspects of the democratic constitutional state will fall by the wayside when "the strategem of society de-mystifies the state."[34]

The society that functions hermetically on the model of corporate management relieves the state of its central management role, making it just one partner among others and reducing its role to one of residual regulation. The arrangement, however, renders obsolete a whole range of possibilities for society to influence its development through politics. The normative relation in democratic theory, by contrast, consists precisely in the fact that political institutions and processes should guarantee and mediate social emancipation. The democratic state performs this task in two defensive manners and through two constructive strategies. (a) It institutionally protects against the abuse of political power through rights connected with liberal freedoms. (b) It defends against the negative effects of the social and economic use of power by means of basic social rights and welfare programs. On the constructive side, public power should not only be kept in check but it must also be put into the service of generalizable welfare interests. Likewise, *capital* should not only be

33. Cf. Martin, *op. cit.*
34. Willke, *op. cit*, pp. 140-144.

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prevented from a public exercise of power, but it also must be assigned a positive role in development. From this perspective, political rule and economic power are not regarded merely as potential threats but considered indispensable resources for progress and development that must be determined democratically.

Judged by these criteria, an examination of the institutions and democratic processes based on party competition in West Germany would cause disappointment on all these points. One may take offense at the inadequacy of regulations to protect the citizen against government encroachments. Similarly, there are gaping holes in the political neutralization of economic power relations. Criticisms have focused strongly on the failure of parties and parliaments in their application of government control to aid democratically legitimated social development. Even more criticism follows from the loss of such opportunities by guaranteeing freedom to private investors. Hence, it is often the case that the material resources of society are not used effectively in development.

But even extreme variants of this criticism do not offer sufficient reason to surrender the responsibility for social control to corporatist structures. In forsaking the democratic state in favor of a corporatist type of management, the democratic norms not only are not fulfilled but they are no longer even recognized as operational possibilities. As far as the first criterion is concerned, recommendations in favor of a corporatist mode of economic and socio-political decision-making do indeed sometimes take on an anti-statist quality espousing libertarian freedom. Such designs boast of being able to overcome problems in regulation by avoiding excessive government constraints, supervision and legalities. This advantage would mean an essential loss of the information and communication exercised by liberal public opinion. The informal, procedurally unstructured performance of regulation would be conducted by autonomous corporate negotiation-systems. Since the model cannot function without massive internal controls in the associations, it would entail restricting the members' freedom within associations.

Secondly, with regard to the neturalization of power relations based on property, which is postulated in democratic political theory,[35] the corporatist framework does not suspend such sources of power. Instead, it practically prescribes and equips them with the authority to participate in binding public arrangments according to their functional relevance to socio-economic processes and developments. The more the principle of territorial representation is replaced by functional representation, the more the general norm of civil equality is affected by the reality of economic inequality. Although the authority and objectivity of the debate carried on within the small circle of those agents most affected does increase because of this exclusiveness, on the other hand, they will find it easier to search out those groups which are

35. Cf. a modern sharpening of this argument in R.A. Dahl, "On Removing Certain Impediments to Democracy in the United States," in I. Howe, ed. *Beyond the Welfare State* (New York, 1982) as well as recently J. Cohen and J. Rogers, *On Democracy* (New York, 1983).

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excluded. Because they might lack jurisdiction or fail to have the organizational ability to fight back, these excluded groups can be burdened with the costs of the compromise settlement. In this mode of conflict resolution the battle-line between labor and capital may become quite blurred. In the name of a threatened productivist mentality, a coalition also might be formed to oppose the interests of third-party-out-siders (consumer, unemployed, etc.). Still, compared with territorial forms of representation, a new and much sharper system of social and technical decision-making emerges, controlled by precisely those centers of socio-economic power that were supposed to be neutralized by the principle of democratic equality.

Thirdly, these conditions would negatively influence any capacity to establish a political program. Initiatives for political reform, whose range of influence goes beyond the immediate distributive interests of sharply defined occupational and economic groups, will scarcely result from negotiation systems whose partners only have a mandate to represent these narrow interests. To the extent that government policy, for reasons of a lack of its own competency or technical knowledge, delegates responsibilities to social agencies, it invests them with jurisdiction. Within certain limits, it also authorizes autonomous regulatory activities that may indeed increase the rationality of the resulting self-regulation. At the same time, however, the range in which any regulation is exercised usually shrinks. It cannot be expected that such systems of negotiation would produce settlements which would change the status quo by removing one of their actors.[36] Instead, the associations concerned would probably withdraw from the negotiations systems. As a consequence, no "unprofessional" state solution would be found, but also no solution at all would be adduced. Hence, the dynamics of interaction would fall back to the level of rational market processes. If government sovereignty can be understood as a resource, or as a significant instrument for society to influence the shaping and reforming of itself, then this resource is lost to the extent that one capitulates to the enormous difficulties of applying it effectively. In addition, if control over its application is ceded to social sub-systems, then it also is lost. In these hands, it would be used against particular interests for refusing to cooperate.

Still, given the normative criteria for a theory of democracy, the transfer of parts of the state's regulatory jurisdiction to social associations, which thus assume the role of "private governments," does not neutralize or level the social power based on socio-economic differences. A corporatist management policy, which in the name of an allegedly higher rationality in organizational self-regulation must first transform the "responsible" actors into participants, must also prescribe their interests and power resources before it can hope for voluntary cooperation from these social actors. Conversely, it must renounce political goals which would redistribute or reallocate power among the social actors as precondition or effect. Whether any harmonization of interests comes about this way, and to what extent, or on what "third

36. Wiesenthal, *op. cit.*

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parties" the resulting costs are externalized — all this no longer could be subjected to political control in a corporatist mode of decentralized macro-regulation.

The standard argument rejecting such normatively founded objections is a functionalist one. It maintains that the extra-ordinary efficiency of corporatist forms of management, i.e., their adaptability, time economy, access to experts and relative lack of conflict in the many settlements, are benefits that more than outweigh the costs identified in democratic theory.[37] What is empirically true in this argument has already been discussed. But what if the doubts expressed there should prove to be groundless? And, what if the conditions about origins and conflict-free nature of a corporatist settlement were true? In this rather improbable case, one would still have to fall back on the assumption that political systems hardly can afford to "function in disregard of" their normative constitutive principles, despite the functional appeals of corporate processes. Any corporatist regulation which has achieved complete normality "would require justification on very different principles from those which underlie parliaments based on universal suffrage. Part of the justification would be in terms of results, but the fact that Mussolini got Italian trains to run on time has never vindicated Italian fascism. The basis on which we as citizens can justify giving what amounts to a double vote to economic producers cannot rest solely on performance. If we are to call the institution 'democratic,' then legitimacy must be given or withheld on democratic grounds."[38] It follows from this that, as least in societies which develop political regulation through such "semi-official"means, there is a strong need for new political amendments, theoretical revisions and democratic reinterpretations of their basic principles of legitimation. Their political institutions otherwise would block the bases for their own recognition. Insofar as they were "realistic" amendments to allegedly outmoded normative aspects of democratic theory, such revisions must *extend* their application to new, partially "de-governmentalized" forms of collective regulation.

Of course, a good part of the previous objections from the perspective of normative theories of democracy would become irrelevant if an effective distribution of equal power and resources between labor and capital, professionals and clients, suppliers and consumers, etc. could be assumed. Such an "equality of weapons" is often presupposed,[39] but seldom convincingly proven. Normally, one relies on the belief that the social power of property is counterbalanced by the "countervailing power" of organization. This assumption is not convincing. First, it cannot be excluded that owners have special organizational advantages, while non-owners suffer from special organizational problems. Consequently, the lack of one power resource cannot simply be compensated by use of the other.[40] Second, as with military-strategic

37. Cf. Streeck, and my commentary, *op. cit.*
38. A. Cawson, *Corportism and Welfare. Social Policy and State Intervention in Britain* (London, 1982) p. 110.
39. Cf. also Böckenförde, *op. cit.*
40. Cf. Scmitter and Streeck, *op. cit.*, pp. 95-114.

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balances of power, the determination of "equivalence" or "non-equivalence" is impossible independently from the situation. It can be carried out only "in conjunction with the scenario."[41] Thus, the concrete situation of conflict must be known in order to judge the equivalence of the negotiating partners. Still, it must be admitted that under the precondition of power-equivalence, if it can be proven for a particular situation, then an important part of democratic theory's objections to the corporatist system of negotiation would be invalidated.

Even if positive proof of this point could be offered, the question of "those who are entitled to participate" in negotiating systems based on functional representation would remain unsolved. This problem can be illustrated by the hypothetical example of a "labor contract" between wage-and-price partners. As long as the currently unemployed and those just entering the labor market do not participate in negotiating such an agreement, the agreement merely tends to protect employment. It would not increase employment. Consequently, the costs of unemployment would be externalized all the more effectively on third parties. But how could the desirable "completeness" be guaranteed? Apparently not only by the institutional guarantee of the negotiating system, of its participants and technical competencies, but it must also grant organizational assistance to those, such as the unemployed, who typically are not in a position to form their own organs of functional representation. Before macro-regulations satisfying this principle of "complete" participation could be implemented, however, the corresponding systems of negotiation (e.g., on the pattern of an economic and social council), would first have to be set up. Of course, a good part of the advantages based precisely on the incompleteness in this form of management and the flexibility of its para-constitutional ability to reach an accord, would again be lost.

Some of these reservations could be refuted also by stressing the coexistence between the competing jurisdictions of functional corporatist and territorial-parliamentary regulatory mechanisms. This regularly occurs in the ideal-typical formulations of "liberal" and "neo"-corporatist regimes. But there could be some reliance placed on a balance between the two types of regulations only if it were clear about what mechanism could prevent them from tilting toward a progressive undermining of the governmental regulatory jurisdiction by increased corporatist regulation. Such a limiting mechanism that ensures balance is not detectable either in the democratic political systems laboring under symptoms of financial crisis and "ungovernability," or in the theoretical constructs of those who consider the corporatist solution to be technically superior to a "hypertrophied" statism in such crisis situations.

41. S. Lutz, "Zur Methodologie militärischer Kräftevergleiche. Anmerkungen zu einem sicherheitspolitischen Instrument unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Nuklearwaffen in und für Europa," in *Politische Vierteljahresschrift* 23 (1982) p. 22.

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Notes and Commentary

LEFT MELANCHOLY

by David Gross

1.

It is fascinating to see the extent to which European thought took a melancholic turn in the decades before World War I.

Almost simultaneously, a number of related ideas became matters of major concern, particularly for middle-class intellectuals. Among these were the notion that life is by nature "incomplete," that there is an irreconcilable opposition between desire and fulfillment, that the contemporary world is ugly and "impure," and that existence itself is in a "fallen" state and apparently unredeemable. These ideas stimulated a mood of melancholic sadness, since the realm of values and the realm of matter were by all appearances unbridgeable. Not surprisingly, a whole literary and philosophical generation felt compelled to speak of the "tragic," or the "tragic vision," or "tragic consciousness."[1] This sense of tragedy, in turn, opened the way to resignation, and resignation to predominantly melancholic responses.

2.

In the *fin-de-siècle*, virtually every aspect of bourgeois culture was invaded by these sentiments. Not, however, working-class culture, or at any rate not its socialist wing; this culture was instead suffused with great hope and optimism — the very optimism which, a few decades earlier, had gripped the bourgeoisie when it perceived itself to be a rising, progressive class.

This optimism became so much a part of the fabric of socialist culture that no one thought of questioning it — except finally Sorel around 1900.

Of all the things that separate the present age from that one, the depth of this taken-for-granted optimism is perhaps the most striking. Not even the severest set-backs evoked melancholic reflections. Pessimism had no place. One simply remembered the long haul and redoubled one's efforts. In the last analysis, the *telos* of history was the guarantor of some future, inevitable triumph of the working class: the revolutionary *Dies Irae*.

3.

By 1900-1920, several young middle-class intellectuals (born mainly in the 1880s and early 1890s) were unhappy with the tone of resignation and despair which characterized much of their culture. They wanted to, as it were, "overcome" melancholy, and they believed that the only way to do so was by making contact with "Reality."

Their assumption was simple: they had become melancholic in the first place because they did not "know" Reality; they had somehow lost touch with it. For this reason, everything around them appeared to be floating, ambiguous, unreal. If, however, they could become securely grounded again — if, that is, they could discover

1. See Michael Löwy, *Georg Lukács: From Romanticism to Bolshevism*, trans. Patrick Camiller (London, 1979), pp. 65-67, 100-01; and Kurt Lenk, "Das tragische Bewusstsein in der deutsche Soziologie," *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie*, XVI (1964), pp. 257-87.

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or re-discover Reality — they were certain that their depressive sadness regarding life would disappear.

It is this context that makes it easier to explain the popularity of Bergson, who introduced the young to the *élan vital*; or of *Lebensphilosophie* which, between 1900 and 1915, was at least as popular as Existentialism was between 1945 and 1960; or of Nietzsche above all, who pointed the way out of melancholia, a way which led through the "reality" of the will to the future possibility of an *Übermensch.*

But for many of the young intellectuals, each of these solutions still remained within the straightjacket of middle-class cultural presuppositions. To find Reality one had to break through all of them. Reality, some argued, was the proletariat. To find and fuse with the proletariat would dispell the awareness of life as tragic incompleteness.

There was an aspect of this mode of thinking in Lukács's conversion to communism in 1918. Alfred Kurella, another convert, expressed a similar attitude in 1920. For him, the discovery of the working class — after years of flirting with "bourgeois" solutions — amounted to nothing less than a breakthrough to Truth. Once he had "found [his] *way to reality*," he joined the KPD in order to place himself in service to it.[2]

Marxism became a means of transcending the debilitating effects of melancholic resignation.

4.

Walter Benjamin, a member of this generation of young intellectuals, may have been attracted to Marxism partly for these reasons. However, writing in 1931 he noticed a startling reversal of the process which led from melancholia to commitment. Certain leftist poets and writers were no longer overcoming melancholy by embracing the proletariat. They were instead deserting the proletariat and retreating into melancholy.

A new phenomenon had appeared which Benjamin termed "left melancholy" (*linke Melancholie*).[3] No one had ever juxtaposed these two words before. "Left" had always meant something progressive, forward-looking; "melancholy" always meant aristocratic nostalgia or romantic ennui. Benjamin, however, put both terms together in a new combination to refer to those on the left who had withdrawn from political action to a position above the fray. The melancholy left now claimed to speak not for a particular embattled class (the proletariat) but for the interests of all mankind. At the same time it substituted a fatalistic for an interventionist attitude toward the world. The net result: unlike those of two decades earlier, it moved not toward but away from a radical posture (i.e., back to something more comfortably "bourgeois").

5.

The accuracy of Benjamin's description aside, why did he label this move "melancholic?" What is melancholy?

A clue to the meaning Benjamin imputed to the term lies in his *Trauerspiel* study written six years earlier. There melancholia meant several things simultaneously: an urge toward contemplative self-absorption; a turning one's back on "earthly life"; a disinterest in direct experience; and an excessive bookishness which relates best to objects when they are immobilized in language.[4]

2. Alfred Kurella, *Politischer Rundbrief* (1920), pp. 61-62; see Walter Laqueur, *Young Germany* (New York, 1962), p. 125, italics added.

3. Walter Benjamin, "Linke Melancholie," *Gesammelte Schriften*, Vol. III, ed. Hella Tiedemann-Bartels (Frankfurt, 1972), pp. 279-83.

4. Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, trans. J. Osborne (London, 1977), pp. 138-58.

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When Benjamin accused a portion of the left of becoming melancholic he seems to have had these connotations in mind. The problem of the melancholic left was that it had replaced action with thought. It treated the world as if meaning had departed, leaving only an empty shell. It espoused a view that one had no choice but to *endure* existence now that truth had withdrawn into transcendence. It hinted at the fatalistic notion that human processes were after all only natural processes, and that one could do no more than observe them from afar, like a prince incognito watching over a pointless succession of events.[5]

6.

Couldn't it be said that the intellectual left in the 1980s is also melancholic in Benjamin's sense? Hasn't it become overly reflective? Hasn't it opted for the insights that come from knowledge instead of practice? And hasn't it retreated into the arcane and the willfully useless (a characteristic Benjamin also identified as a penchant of melancholics)?

A case could be made, but with this difference. Today's melancholic left does not seem to believe that it has abandoned social reality so much as social reality has abandoned it. The world, which twenty years ago appeared malleable and teeming with possibilities, has now shown itself to be inflexible, unyielding, and apparently unfaithful to its own potential. Another notable difference: in Benjamin's day when a few left melancholics fell away from the working-class movement, the movement itself remained intact. In the 1970s and 1980s, when the "Movement" failed to live up to its own expectations, nothing much remained except a heap of broken shards which have yet to be reassembled.

That the left is currently in an advanced state of what Hegel called Unhappy Consciousness is not in question. But this state is very close to what could be called melancholia. According to Hegel, the malaise which accompanies Unhappy Consciousness occurs when there is no objective correlate to one's mental concepts. Thought is then thrown back upon itself. It dreams and suffers. It confronts the world as alien and recalcitrant. This in turn produces, as Hegel says, a mood of "infinite sorrow," a feeling of "self-conscious abjectness and depression." In such a state one experiences oneself as a "divided and discordant being," out of touch with the world as it actually is. The result is a pulling back into oneself to do "nothing at all." Living comes to mean simply facing squarely the "feeling of [one's] own unhappiness."[6]

This description does not vary much from those attributes Benjamin associated with the melancholic left of his own time; nor is it inaccurate as a psychological portrait of the intellectual left as it exists today.

7.

If a good part of the contemporary left has indeed become melancholic, the reasons go deeper than those cited by Benjamin. Today both the turn inward and the widespread pessimism and inaction are not the result of mere subjective whim. They have to do with the new *structural realities* which now operate to a greater or lesser extent in all Western societies — realities which Benjamin was unable to anticipate in 1931. These include the severe attenuation of the public sphere, which makes meaningful political engagement of the kind Benjamin had in mind increasingly difficult; the growing ineffectiveness of any type of protest in the face of the enormity of modern bureaucratic

5. See Julian Roberts, *Walter Benjamin* (Atlantic Highlands, 1983), p. 147.

6. See G.W.F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, trans. J.B. Baillie (New York, 1967), pp. 263, 257-62, 752-53.

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organizations which seem capable of absorbing almost any form of opposition; and the way in which, in a world of modern mass media, any "event" (even a "radical" one) gets swallowed up, becomes no more than an object of mass consumption, and consequently gets lost or standardized in networks of relations beyond its control.[7]

These structural realities, which were not yet in place fifty years ago, are now capable of nullifying even the most significant political action. Just as importantly, they have helped provoke, within the left community, a complete loss of confidence in a beneficient logic of history. It is no longer assumed that there are any "grand narratives" working themselves out through time (e.g., the liberation of humanity, the growth of a revolutionary proletariat, and the like). Nor does it appear evident that "it is the nature of truth to prevail when its time has come" (Hegel). The dialectic seems defunct. Few expect salvation to come automatically from social or economic "contradictions." One finds instead, as Lyotard put it approvingly, a new "toleration for the incomensurable." Internal tensions now seem to produce not the conditions for revolt but the rationales for further management and administration.

None of these developments, which today must be taken as givens, were obvious to the left of the past. But now, taken altogether, they virtually abolish the very conditions which would make a critical politics possible. It is no wonder that a new melancholia, seemingly deeper and darker than the one Benjamin described, has settled over the left in the 1980s. One can find traces of it even in the tone of recent left writing. The first paragraph of Jacoby's *Dialectic of Defeat* (1981), for example, would have been unthinkable in 1900: "A rough egalitarianism . . . has chopped down political hopes and beliefs of every stripe . . . . The wreckage extends in every direction. The vastness of the junkyard encourages, almost compells, retreat and resignation."[8]

8.

To be sure, melancholy is not found everywhere on the left. In the face of the contemporary crisis of politics, three options have presented themselves. Melancholia is the first. The second is cynicism. The third is a willed optimism.

Like melancholia, cynicism grasps the full dimension of the crisis and takes it as more or less irreversible. But its response is hard-edged. It resorts to the "crooked smile" of disillusionment which prides itself on the capacity to confront the facts without hope. Cynicism feeds on mockery and sarcasm. It thrives on the by now familiar stance of "elegant bitterness." Or else it adopts an "ironic" attitude which avers that nothing much matters; that life is only a play of contraries with no resolution; that under the circumstances a cool cleverness is the best pose.[9]

Left optimism, on the other hand, denies that the worst is upon us. It assumes an attitude of studied naiveté, as perhaps it must if it is to *do* anything. Its working supposition is: all is not lost; a new day may be approaching; the "dispossessed [will eventually] accomplish the extraordinary against the harshest adversity"; "the future remain[s] open for ever greater achievements."[10]

That part of the left which has opted for cynicism has withdrawn from politics altogether and may not be heard from again.

7. On this last point see especially Pierre Nora, "L'Evénement monstre," *Communications*, no. 18 (1972).

8. Russell Jacoby, *The Dialectic of Defeat: Contours of Western Marxism* (Cambridge, England: 1981), p. ix.

9. Peter Sloterdijk, "Cynicism — The Twilight of False Consciousness," *New German Critique*, no. 33 (Fall, 1984), pp. 190-94; see also my essay "Irony and the 'Disorders of the Soul'," *Telos*, no. 34 (Winter, 1977-78), pp. 167-72.

10. Sean Wilentz, "Herbert Gutman, 1928-1985," *Village Voice*, August 6, 1985, p. 43.

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That part of the left which has opted for willed optimism has withdrawn from theory; its métier is now day-to-day practical activity, mostly uniformed by larger theoretical concerns.

That part of the left which has opted for melancholia has withdrawn *into* theory; its main interest is reflective, conceptual understanding.

For present purposes, the last group is the most interesting. The queston may be worth asking: As unpalatable as the melancholic choice might seem, is there anything redeemable in it? Is melancholy *only* incapacitating, or is there an aspect of it which could be viewed as positive, even "progressive?"

9.

A similar question was asked of melancholia in earlier times.

From the age of the Greeks until the Renaissance the term carried almost exclusively negative connotations. The melancholic was an individual whose liver had secreted an excessive amount of black bile. As this entered his body it affected his temperament. He became a victim of the *humor melancholicus*. This made him not only sad and mournful, but generally depressed, misanthropic, solitary, petty, cranky, suspicious, and vulnerable to fantasies and forebodings. Mentally he was said to be obsessed with "solitude, dryness, wilderness, desert; slime, mud, foulness, slough; sorrow, fear, darkness, despair; doubt, weariness, exhaustion, [and] strain."[11] Worse, if the melancholic's bile — which is normally cold and sluggish — should become "overheated," madness would result. It became overheated, and then eventually "burnt," when agitated by certain emotions or delusions which produced a state called "adust" (or burnt) melancholy. A direct link was thereby established between melancholia and insanity, making the melancholic state still more disreputable.

In the fifteenth century, however, a revisionist interpretation of melancholy appeared, stimulated in part by a rethinking of some relatively obscure ancient texts assembled by Aristotle's pupils (the *Problemata physica*). Renaissance writers like Marsilio Ficino argued that, although adust melancholy can cause madness, it can also engender the highest states of imagination, vision, and ecstacy. Backed by such an interpretation, the melancholic condition began to be regarded not as a form of mental illness but as a mark of genius. Particularly within the artistic community, even third-rate talents affected a melancholic disposition because of its associations with exceptional ability and surpassing insights.[12]

In the seventeenth century, another revision took place, this time among the Puritans. Instead of being an indication of genius, melancholy in the devout believer was taken to be a favorable sign of deep spiritual anguish. This positive evaluation of melancholy was something new to the religious community, for in the Middle Ages the word *merencolie* suggested depravity and sinfulness. It was presumed that the sadness of the melancholic belied a basically evil nature. Among the Puritan divines, however, this view was altered considerably. Melancholy was still a *Balneum Diaboli*, a "bathing place of the devil." But if one successfully worked through the despair which melancholy brings, it could be seen as a path leading to redemption. God, who works by contraries, who always wounds before He heals, had in fact blessed those inflicted with melancholia. Their spiritual suffering was an opportunity, and perhaps even a neces-

11. John Owen King III, *The Iron of Melancholy* (Middletown, 1983), p. 24; Robert Burton's *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621) gives a full account of these and other characteristics.

12. Vasari adopted this line of reasoning in his *Lives*. Melanchthon felt compelled to call Dürer a melancholic to underscore his genius. A contemporary of Raphael noted that he was "inclined to melancholy like all men of exceptional talent." See Rudolph and Margot Wittkower, *Born Under Saturn* (New York, 1963), p. 104.

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sary condition, for salvation, since one had to be fully in the grip of Satan in order, later, to be fully in the grip of Christ.[13] Here the melancholic temper was affirmed not because it produced great artists but because it produced potential saints.

In the early nineteenth century one could speak of yet another revision: that of romantic melancholy (represented best by the Byronic hero, almost invariably a melancolic). Because, for many of the Romantics, understanding life meant understanding the inherent *pathos* of life, the deeper one peered into the human condition, the more somber and pessimistic one had to become. By this reasoning, the most profound poets and thinkers were necessarily those who were the most brooding and melancholic. On the face of it, a melancholic demeanor was a sure sign of inner depth and penetration.

Though all three of these rehabilitations rescued melancholy to some extent, they did not prevent the emergence of a massive counter-movement against melancholia which set in by the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This counter-movement rejected all that had been said in favor of melancholy since the Renaissance and returned to the hostile assessment which had prevailed during the previous two millennia. Melancholia was a disease, a sickness, with nothing whatever to recommend it.

At the forefront of this reaction was psychiatry. Within a few decades it had appropriated virtually the entire discussion of melancholia. It then proceeded to define melancholy not artistically or religiously, but medically, clinically, "scientifically." It forged its own concepts, its own elaborate discourses, which are essentially those we use today when we talk seriously of "melancholia."

Early on, clinical psychiatrists distinguished two types of melancholia: acute and mild. Acute melancholia — identifiable by its morbidity, suicidal obsessions, psychic paralysis, and even dementia — *is* pathological.[14] No one could and no one has professed to see anything salvagable in it. With mild melancholia the matter is less clear-cut. It may be a "personality disorder" but it is not a form of insanity. Its most prominant traits are a general surface passivity (which may nonetheless conceal a deep inner restlessness); depression; sadness or "heaviness of spirit"; a hesitancy to make decisions, resolutions, or commitments; a picture of the world which paints "gray on gray"; a fascination with *idées fixe*; and finally, a pervasive sense of meaninglessness which assumes that the world as given is depleted, empty, or without inherent value.[15]

All these qualities of mild melancholia may be disturbing, but they do not necessarily indicate the presence of a sickness which has to be "cured." In fact, it could be that mild melancholia, with its depressive, disconsolate mood, is the result of a thoroughly *realistic* assessment of a situation. If so, it would represent not a false consciousness that has to be dispelled, but a painfully true consciousness which ought to be respected.

10.

To return to the issue. If, from the time of ancient Greece until the Renaissance, melancholia was associated with a noxious humor, and if, in spite of this, melancholia was thoroughly rehabilitated artistically religiously, and philosophically between 1500

13. On the Puritan view of melanchoy, see John Owen King, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-36.

14. See, for example, Richard von Krafft-Ebing, *Die Melancholie. Eine klinische Studie* (Erlangen, 1874), 1-12, 19-29; and C. Lange, *Periodische Depressionszustände und ihre Pathogenesis* (Hamburg and Leipzig, 1896), pp. 5-20.

15. See Theodor Ziehen, *Psychiatrie* (Leipzig, 1911), pp. 391-420.

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and 1850 A.D., would it not be possible — now that melancholy is once more viewed as a sickness — to rescue it yet again, though this time for entirely different reasons?

And further: If a portion of the left suffers from melancholy,[16] is this wholly unfortunate? Is there nothing salutary that can be drawn from the melancholic state?

The last question is the major concern here, but in addressing it the others can be responded to as well.

11.

The answer to the question must be: No, there is not a great deal that can be drawn from the melancholic condition. It would be better if the intellectual left were not burdened by melancholy, and better still if the processes which provoked it had not occured as they did. Melancholic withdrawal, inaction, and irresponsibility cannot be called worthwhile. Nor is there much to defend in the sometimes excessive despair which accompanies the melancholic mood.

Nevertheless, there are three facets of melancholia — whether found in an individual or a group (such as the intellectual left today) — which prevent it from being a wholly regressive condition. These are, first its attitude toward the past, second its attitude toward "dreaming" or reverie, and third its attitude toward *any* status quo. Each of these may seem, at first glance, to contain nothing creditable, but a second, closer look permits one to view melancholia in a more favorable light.

12.

According to the psychiatric literature, the melancholic is an individual who is fixated on the past, who finds it difficult to forget what has gone before. He not only has a good memory for the past, he also longs to repeat it. As Menard Boss phrased it, the melancholic possesses "an exclusive attachment to his past" — that is, he cannot help looking backward and lingering on what has already happened.[17] Minkowski and others have pointed out how the past sometimes literally becomes the melancholic's only present; it dominates his existence, making him feel "determined" by events which happened long before.[18] Similarly, the intellectual left also remembers too much and too well, but this is not always an affliction. In a world in which amnesia is encouraged as a norm, the left is still able to recall things that would otherwise be obliterated. Even in its isolation, it is now virtually the *only* custodian of values which no other group or institution in modern society is bent on preserving.

Furthermore, psychiatry defines the melancholic as one who is obsessed by some powerful fixed idea which holds his attention and will not let him go. This obsession is what helps cause the melancholic's familiar "lowness of spirit." The intellectual left's

16. I take it for granted here that left melancholy does not stem from psychic inhibitions, feelings of ambivalence toward lost love objects, or the regression of the libido, though these are causes frequently mentioned when individual cases of melancholia are diagnosed *psychologically*. (Carl Kraussold, *Melancholie und Schuld* [Stuttgart, 1894]; Sigmund Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia," *Standard Edition*, vol. XIV, pp. 243-58.) Nor would it make sense to attribute left melancholy to chemical or physiological causes; no one could argue that collectively the intellectual left suffers from endocrine imbalances or abnormal amounts of alkaline deposits. (See Richard von Krafft-Ebing, *op. cit.*, pp. 4, 21, 64-65; C. Lange, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-13, 32-37.) Rather, the etiology of left melancholy is social. It has originated as a response to a particular social and political situation — a situation not only of defeat and retrenchment for the left generally, but of newly ascendent power configurations (see section #7 above).

17. Menard Boss, *Psychoanalysis and Daseinsanalysis*, trans. Ludwig B. Lefebvre (New York, 1963), p. 210.

18. See Eugène Minkowski, *Lived Time*, trans. Nancy Metzel (Evanston, 1970), pp. 298-305; and Gabel, reporting on the work of Gebsattel and Tellenbach, in Joseph Gabel, *False Consciousness*, trans. Margaret A. Thompson (New York, 1975), pp. 187-97.

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"metaphysical sadness" is not so different. In an affirmative, upbeat age the melancholy left is unable to let go of certain contrary notions, one being the value of critical thought, and the other the concept of the *via negativa* as something "positive." To hold onto such ideas may appear, from the present perspective, a form of sickness, but from another viewpoint — that of the *camera obscura* of history — it may be a mark of sound mental health.

13.

Second, the melancholic is a dreamer. In his despondency he dreams of worlds which do not exist.

Sometimes these dreams are backwards toward the might-have-beens. Psychiatric case histories are filled with melancholic individuals who contemplate for hours the "implicit futures" of their lives, futures which never occurred. These lost possibilities leap toward them at unexpected moments and call out for attention so as not to vanish forever. The melancholic left, profoundly disappointed with the present, may have parallel experiences which ought not to be discounted. Already in his "Theses on the Philosophy of History" Benjamin spoke of the need to seize the images of the past as they flash up in moments of danger. Every image, every unrealized possibility, that is not recognized and grasped the instant it flares up "threatens to disappear irretrievably."[19] This gloomy insight, shared by all melancholics, is something which the intellectual left has by now become aware. And yet, even though the dreaming may be backward rather than forward, it should not for that reason be treated as retrograde and hence dismissible.

Sometimes, though, these dreams come not from the past but from a feeling of profound incompleteness in the present. The melancholic experiences an absence in the middle of every present, an emptiness in every "now." Nothing is enough, nothing satisfies. This propels him toward dreaming about all that could be but is not.

Flaubert understood this when he wrote that the prostitute's "total lack of any human relation" is what makes her "dream so of love."[20] It is precisely the vacuity of her life that allows her to imagine a fuller love than any she could have known. Paradoxically, abjectness opens the way to greater vision, as may also be the case with melancholia.

Likewise, Baudelaire wrote: "Have you noticed that a stretch of sky, glimpsed through a basement window, . . . gives a deeper sense of infinity than a vast panorama seen from a mountaintop?"[21] Infinity seems deeper and bluer to those whose angle of vision is most constricted. It appears to be the same with the intellectual left. Its melancholy — its glimpse of life through a basement window — may let it see, conceptualize, and dream things which would otherwise not be possible. This constrictedness is not, in itself, anything to defend, but it can have important consequences which should not be lost sight of.

14.

Third, the melancholic is a malcontent. His temperament leads him to complain about everything he encounters, which makes him unpleasant company. But at the

19. Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn (New York, 1969), p. 255.

20. Gustave Flaubert, cited in Robert Alter's review of *The Letters of Gustave Flaubert, 1830-1857*, in *The New Republic*, vol. MLXXXII, no. 8 (February 23, 1980), p. 28.

21. Charles Baudelaire, *Correspondance générale* (in *Oeuvres complètes*) III, pp. 39-40; see Victor Brombert, *The Romantic Prison* (Princeton, 1978), p. 133.

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same time it is just this quality which gives him a sharper eye for detecting abuses and injustice.

This is one reason why melancholy has, historically speaking, been open to political interpretation. In Elizabethean England, for example, the melancholic was considered by nature a "malcontent," but every malcontent was presumed to be a real or potential "rebel."[22] An interesting connection was thereby established between a psychological and a political disposition. Because the melancholic individual was seen as abstracted and unsociable, unpredictable and often vengeful, he was identified as a "political troublemaker"; it was easy to assume that he must be "dissatisfied with the political status quo and eager to overthrow it."[23] The tendency of the melancholic to thrive in solitude, to be crafty and apparently conspiratorial, only confirmed this impression. More disturbing yet was the melancholic's generally acknowledged "quickness of mind." Behind his apparent lassitude there was thought to be great mental acuity combined with great inner agitation. This made the melancholic someone to be feared politically, particularly if he continually complained that the world was an "unweeded garden," or if he hinted at the need for some total "cleansing" of the body politic.

Another conclusion can be drawn when one thinks of melancholy from a political point of view. Because melancholics are usually recognized as having "restless, unquiet thoughts," they cannot be easily regimented.[24] Their refractory temperaments make it hard to organize them into patterned modes of behavior, and their *contemptus mundi* makes them impervious to the blandishments of authority. All authoritarian states which have claimed to legislate happiness have also declared war on melancholics, since power always wants to prohibit that which is recalcitrant or potentially disruptive. In a word, melancholia may be (and historically has been) considered a hinderance to the efficiency of the state. Even in the classical utopias melancholia was banished, for its presence was taken as a sign of the failure of perfect order.[25]

15.

These three facets of melancholy contain elements worth commending. But melancholy has one major drawback, and this is serious: it produces an incapacity for action.

On a personal level, the melancholic is often unable to *do* anything because he is convinced of the futility of all human effort. Whether he acts or not, whether he exerts himself or not, the outcome, he is certain, will be the same (which is why individuals suffering from melancholia most often spend their lives at dead center). Today the melancholic left manifests on a social level the same inability to act. It procrastinates, temporizes, and becomes "reflective" at just those moments when political or social action is called for. Not only does it not act, but it takes the very conditions which produce deeds in others and turns them into the building blocks of pure knowledge. Everything that happens becomes material for thought. If society today is said to be "diseased," the melancholic left becomes more interested in the nature of the disease than in the cure. And in time it becomes more concerned with theories *about* the disease than the disease itself. Everything exists in order to end up as a concept. "Melancholy

22. Bridget Gellert Lyons, *Voices of Melancholy* (New York, 1971), p. 18.

23. Lawrence Babb, *The Elizabethean Malady: A Study of Melancholia in English Literature from 1580 to 1642* (East Lansing, 1965), p. 75.

24. Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, ed. Holbrook Jackson (London, 1962), I, p. 389.

25. Wolf Lepenies, *Melancholie und Gesellschaft* (Frankfurt, 1969), pp. 34-42.

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betrays the world for the sake of knowledge."[26]

It is no accident that much of the melancholy left now resides in academia, where the very structures of life encourage inactivity, disengagement. As with melancholics generally, the theoretical left is cut off from the kind of experience in and of the world which might make a difference — which might point the way beyond stasis. Even where the left knows that it has imprisoned itself in thought, it still seems unable to break out of its own mental categories in order to be affected by experience. Hence it remains detached from life, burdened by a weak power of resolution, and confined for the most part to the ivory tower of theory. This is a kind of pathology whether it occurs in an individual or a group. When an individual loses connection with experience he becomes morose, irritable, withdrawn, rigid. When the left does, the result is an esoteric, even hermetic, type of theorizing which appears to have little bearing on the world as it is. The best of these melancholic theories may be highly insightful, but they also seem inert and ossified.

For a long time the link between melancholia and inaction has been noted. But it has always been taken for granted that the melancholic state was the *cause* of the inaction — that is, that melancholia came first and inaction followed in its wake. In humoral theory, for instance, the heaviness of the bile was said to be the source of melancholic stasis. Likewise, a branch of modern psychiatry has stressed physio-chemical determinants. A better way to understand this link, however, is to reverse the connection: *the inability to act is itself the cause of melancholy*. If this is so, the solution would appear to be: return to praxis and melancholy will dissipate. Such a conclusion would not be so different from the one arrived at earlier when "making contact with Reality" was said to be the way out of an impasse.

Yet for the left today this solution is not so simple. What practice might mean in "bad times" is not entirely clear. Furthermore, there is the problem of will or determination which, for those sunk in melancholy, is not easy to muster *ex nihilo*. Although the melancholy left values the negative it seems unable to engage in the "labor of the negative." Matters are not made better by the fact that what persists of left activism in the 1980s is for the time being getting along without theory at all — and theory is practically the only forte of melancholics.[27]

Though the intellectual left appears incapable of making a gesture toward action, it is conceivable that at some point a practice could spring from the decaying remains of melancholic thought. Of course, any outlook steeped in melancholy would caution against such an expectation; melancholy seems able to produce — only more melancholy. On the other hand, there is much unrest and disquietude behind the intellectual left's apparent inertia. This turmoil is purely internal and usually confined to "thinking," but it might contain possibilities for the future which at the moment no one can foresee.

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26. Walter Benjamin, *Origin*, p. 157.

27. The active left today is pragmatic and anti-theoretical. Not universal reflection but local, practical issues are its main concern. Theory is shunned because it seems to divide and separate potential constituencies. Loose feelings of "brotherhood" and "community" bind together groups of activists, not an adherence to some overriding political or theoretical commitment. On this see, for example, Barbara Epstein, "The Culture of Direct Action." *Socialist Review*, no. 82/83 (1985), p. 57.

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FUNDAMENTALISM, TRADITIONALISM, AND ISLAM*

by Oliver Roy

Obscurantism, return of the Middle Ages, fascism, clericalism . . . . Utter nonsense has been written on the return of religion in the Muslem world, reflecting the old Western phantasm about Islam. In fact, the phenomena grouped under the rubric of "fundamentalism" are quite heterogenous and belong to different catagories, of which only one — Islamicism — is really new. Islamic revivalism must be understood not in terms of recent Western history, emphasizing the emergence of the modern state from the secularization of society, but in the historical and social context of the Muslem world.

We shall call "traditional" the will to freeze society according to the memory of a past one: the society of which grandfathers speak. Here religion and custom are fused, and society's historicity is obliterated in favor of an imaginary timeless society under sudden attack by a pernicious modernity. Traditionalism does not offer any political project. It lives in nostalgia and tends towards the politically conservative; it accommodates to economic development if profitable, and its nostalgia for the past is more moralistic than prompted by a desire for social justice. The stakes of the traditionalist endeavor ride on mores: the veil for women, education for girls, filial piety, respect for hierarchy. This is the discourse of the squire, and in Afghanistan of the *khan* (landlord), who is a stranger to the city.

Fundamentalism is something else entirely: the idea that a return to the Text is necessary, cutting across the tradition that has dulled and distorted it. Fundamentalism is the "return to . . . ," the rereading, the quest for origins. The enemy is not modernity but tradition, or rather, in a Muslem context, anything other than the Tradition of the Prophet (the *Sunna*). Reformism is indeed the central issue. Fundamentalism is not in itself a political position because the "return" can take diverse forms. There is, first, the return to strict religious practice, as we observe in many emigré milieus; return to the observance of the Text (study of the Koran and the hadiths), which is the fundamentalism of the *madrasa*; and return to the religious law, to the practice of the *Shari'at*, which is the fundamentalism of the *'ulama*: the return to the Text is achieved precisely by the establishment of a new tradition and of a body of exegetes who conceal as much as they reveal the Text. Return thus does not have the same meaning for an *'alim* who follows the scholastic tradition of interpretation and a young intellectual who seeks a political model in the society of the time of the Prophet. Not only does the definition of fundamentalism vary (return, yes, but return to what?), but the political connotations of fundamentalism are very different according to the cultural context. In a country like Afghanistan, where the rhythm of daily life is set by the practice of Islam, and where customary law in nontribal areas is impregnated by the *Shari'at*, there is no rupture between fundamentalism and traditionalism. By contrast, when fundamentalism appears in urban milieus or in countries greatly unsettled by modernization, such as Iran, it soon takes on an oppositional connotation and approaches Islamicism. I have previously compared Islamic fundamentalism with

*Excerpted from the preface of *L'Afghanistan, Islam et modernité* (collection "Esprit," Seuil, 1985). Translated by Kathryn Arjomand.

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16th-century Protestanism[1]: there is a similar complexity in the manner in which the Reformation meshed with the social movements of that epoch. It served as a rector for the German aristocracy as well as for the millenarian peasant revolts and the bourgeois republicans who were to invent modern democracy. We must avoid making mechanical equations between religious attitude and political orientation. Even within the ranks of the *'ulama* we find some reticence on the subject of fundamentalism. All that we can say is that in Afghanistan, fundamentalism — defined as the wish to go back to the *Shari'at* — is the spontaneous attitude of the educated clergy, the *'ulama*. (The mullahs of the villages, lacking mastery of the Text, are traditionalists and not fundamentalists.)

This, then, raises the question of clericalism: can we not discern in fundamentalism a desire for power on the part of the lettered men of religion — those who have mastery of the Text and control of its interpretation? The irony here is that the beneficiaries of return to the Text are precisely those whose existence the Text did not foresee: in the Koran there is no clerical institution, no rock on which to build its Church. The clerical institution is an invention of the Middle Ages. *Figh*, the concrete application of the *Shari'at* to society, is the result of a thousand years of commentary and rereading. The Text itself is obscured because *figh* has generally been taught only from summaries of commentaries on commentaries.

Here three points must be clarified. First, there is no constituted clergy in Sunni Islam. The clergy is not a social body defined by a set of precise interests. It is not accidental that it is Shi'ite Iran where clerics have come into power: nowhere in the Sunni world have the *'ulama* assumed power — not even in Wahabi Arabia. The position of the Sunni *'ulama* in regard to politics is more secular than it may appear, for they recognize the existence of legitimate authority, unlike the Shi'ite clergy. Hence the possibility of an official Islam in the USSR, as in Kabul. At the same time, if fundamentalism is based on a return to the Text, the problem of canon and of the interpretation arises: it is a long way from Kaddafi, for whom the sole Text is the Koran, to the classical *'alim* for whom the fundamental Texts (the Koran and the hadiths) could hardly exist without gloss and a corps of exegetes (the *'ulama*). This is why the fundamentalism of the *'alim* is essentially juridicial and not political.

This leads to a second point. The fundamentalism of the *'ulama* posits a society governed by law: social space is regulated by objective norms which are as independent of the whim of the Prince as Western positive law can be (that is, neither more nor less). Western criticism of the *Shari'at* (savagery, archaism. . .) cannot obscure the fact that the *Shari'at* is indeed a system of law: it contains a set of norms written in general terms and interpreted by a body of jurists. There is no Islamic totalitarianism — that is, the reduction of civil society to politics — most particularly because in Islam the law and its interpreters are self-reproducing independently of the state. By definition, the return to the *Shari'at* is neither fascist nor totalitarian (which does not imply that it is democratic). Indeed, the *Shari'at* does not define a state based on law, despite what the *'ulama* and, above all, the Islamicists say, and it is in this space beyond civil society that Islamicist political thought is deployed, leaving the judiciary administration of civil society to the *'ulama*. The application of the *Shari'at* to civil society provides a guarantee against too forceful an intervention by the ruler, even if it has not prevented the arbitrary exercise of power — but such arbitrariness does not constitute totalitarianism. Western criticism of the *Shari'at* puts into play both values and cultural differences all at

1. For a critical discussion, see Mike Barry, *Le royaume de l'insolence* (Flammarion, 1984), pp. 80 ff. and 276 ff.

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once. We will not enter into this debate (which is often sterile and hypocritical on both sides), but affirm that it rests on a consensus recognizing that a society of law implies a sense of legality, a private sphere and a limit to arbitrary power. Moreover, and particularly in the countryside, the juridical space opened by the *Shari'at* is perceived as protection against economic injustice: even if the *Shari'at* assumes this task badly (for example, in the service of corruption), it gives peasants a language with which to respond to injustice and eventually, in the case of revolt, enables them to find in Islam an outline for political organization compatible with their cultural universe.

Some commentators see in fundamentalism the negation of the tradition of spirituality distinctive of Islam, as if the Letter kills the Spirit.[2] This argument is difficult for us to appreciate because the French Orientalist tradition is centered on the Maghreb, where the great figures of nationalistic fundamentalism, such as Abd el-Krim and Ben Badis, were strongly opposed to Maraboutism (popular Sufism), which they accused of heterodoxy and collaboration. Insofar as forms corresponding to Maraboutism are found in Afghani tribal areas, they belong to the dominant Sufism in Afghanistan which is the fundamentalist tradition, of the Indian sub-continent type; we will come back to this point. Likewise, the great resistence movements against invaders almost always result from the conjunction of a tribal uprising and the emergence of Sufi charismatic figures. Unlike the Maghreb, in Afghanistan Sufism, fundamentalism, millenarianism, and anti-colonial struggles are all connected. It is evident that fundamentalism lends itself to a range of attitudes, from closeness to tradition to political opposition.

By contrast, a new phenomenon appeared in the 1930's in Egypt as well as the Indian sub-continent: the movement of the Muslim Brotherhood.[3] Forty years later, it has become clear that their politicized Islam can no longer be seen as a simple avatar of fundamentalism, and even less of traditionalism. Hence the appearance of the term "Islamicist."[4] What is meant by this term, and what is new in it? First, the origins of the militants: far from issuing from clerical or traditionalist milieus, they come from the modern sectors of society — teacher training schools, faculties of science, urban environments. Next, their political preference: Islamicists are oriented more towards Islamic "ideology" than religion in a strict sense; their problem is to derive from Islam a political model capable of competing with the great Western ideologies. They explicitly speak to the problem of the State ("Islamic republic"). Islamicists have a theory of the party and a sense of history, and embrace political militancy. Rather than wanting, like the *'ulama*, to administer civil society, they intend to reconstruct society, beginning with the State. The relation between the Islamicists and the *'ulama* is thus marked by mutual distrust. Islamicism is not clericalism for the simple reason that, except in Iran, it originates outside of the clergy.

In a sense, the fundamentalism of the Islamicists is more radical than that of the *'ulama*. The former envision not a return to the *Shari'at*, which is perceived as a means and not an end, but the reconstruction of *political* relations according to the model of the first Muslem community. Legalism gives way to utopia, millenarianism, revolu-

2. See Daryush Shayegan, *Qu'est-ce qu'une révolution religieuse?* (Presses d'aujourd'hui, 1982).

3. Cf. R.P. Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brotherhood* (Oxford University Press, 1969); Edward Mortimer, *Faith and Power* (Faber and Faber, 1982); O. Carré and G. Michaud, *Les Frères musulmans* (Gallimard, 1983); Gilles Kepel, *Le prophéte et le pharaon* (La Dècouverte, 1984).

4. I have borrowed this term from J.F. Clément, "Pour une Compréhension des Mouvements Islamiques," *Esprit* (January 1980), who reports to have found it in the writings of Habib Boulares. The term seems to have appeared in North African Muslem circles around 1970 to distinguish between "muslem" and "islami," the latter being those who see in Islam a political ideology.

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tion. For the Islamicist, the return of origins allows not only the accretions to tradition, but also its guardians — the clergy — to be bypassed. The reconstruction of society, if patterned on the mythic model, leaves the place of the latter entirely to the new "clerk" — the intellectual. The difference between the intellectual and the religious man of letters is that, in the last analysis, the orientation of the former is always towards the State. Whether or not he is in opposition, his interlocutor is the State, for the place of his formation (his school), his attitude towards politics, as well as his position in society (usually that of a functionary) all presuppose the existence of the State.

The *'alim*, on the other hand, is relatively indifferent to the State, because his orientation is towards a canon and body of interpreters which are self-producing; his reference is to the Muslem *umma* (community of believers). In the Muslem world, civil society is a society of law; it is the State that may appear particularistic and "fanatical" (fanatacism of the iron hand and the negation of the private sphere; fanatacism of the *'asabiyya* (group solidarity) which can hold on to power only by fighting everyone). The particularism of the State accounts for the extent to which it can be personalized: the theme of the "benevolent sovereign" or guide is a primordial feature of the Muslem political world. While tyranny is a possibility, totalitarianism is not. The Islamicists will recognize this when they confront the cohesion of the *'asabiyya* and of civil society administered by a society of Law by the *'ulama*. This, at least, is the Afghan situation, where we find a structure of support groups (the gawm) and a society of law. Systems which give rise to dictatorial States are those where only the *'asabiyya* can persist vis-à-vis the State (Syria, Libya).

Another example of dictatorship, this one atypical, is Iran, the only country where the clergy has taken up integrally the Islamicist claim. The particular nature of the Shi'ite clergy — politicized, hierarchical, and oppositional — explains its intervention in politics. In the case of Iran, the distinction between Islamicists and traditionalists is produced within the ranks of the clergy, and the current need to exercise power shifts the emphasis from the application of the *Shari'at* to political ideology. The present politics in Iran, like the new legislation, are not concerned with establishing the *Shari'at* as the basis of Iranian law: the legislation borrows from the *Shari'at* only symbols, remaining essentially secular. This parallels the fact that power is more in the hands of the lay Guardians of the Revolution than in the hands of the clergy. Iran is thus an exception, not a prototype, of an "Islamic republic."

Because the Islamicists lack a foothold in civil society, the key to their future is their link with the *'ulama*. The latter offer the only means of penetration into civil society other than the politicization of routine demands, whose ephemeral character has been demonstrated by the experience of the local communist parties. Afghanistan furnishes us with a rare and interesting case of collaboration between the *'ulama* and Islamicists, which is probally possible because the Afghan Islamicists are not cut off from traditional society. It must be noted that among the Afghani Islamicists we find neither the hatred of the West nor the antisemitism so strong in their Egyptian counterparts: this is the consequence of the absence of colonialism as well as the Afghani rebels' distrust of the PLO, which is seen as pro-Soviet.

We need to review value judgments concerning Islamicism. Islamicism is a modern phenomenon. This is neither "to be a partisan" of Islamicism nor to think that if offers the solutions to the crisis of contemporary Muslem societies; the problematic and birthplace of Islamicism are resolutely modern. This allows us to distance ourselves from accusations of archaism concerning Islamic mores. If we address the most controversial issue, that of the status of women, there is, on the one hand, a cultural con-

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text which goes way beyond Islamicism and even beyond Islam, and, on the other hand, an exacerbated puritanism characteristic of many revolutions. The routine practice of any Muslim country makes it evident that not only is the problem, which is real, badly posed, but also that the virulent Western polemic concerning the fate of the Muslem women hides a much greater dispute. In any case, it is necessary to distinguish the position of the Muslem woman in traditional society, which cannot be attributed to Islamicism, and the ways in which the Islamicists attempt to "re-Islamize" the more educated and emancipated urban women.[5]

The question of politicization is the key to these contemporary phenomena. Clearly, this process cannot be viewed from a purely religious or ideological perspective. Afghanistan allows us to explore the problem of politicization, particularly its relation to tribalism, the State and universalism. In Muslem countries, loyalties are divided between support groups (*'asabiyya*, *gawn* in Afghanistan) and the *umma*, the Muslem community (of which the "Arab Nation" in the Ba'athist ideology is a variant), except in a few nations with a tradition of statehood (Egypt, Iran, Morocco). Modern States are founded on the same tension — hence the alternation of ephemeral unions of states (of which Libya holds the record) and the takeover of the State apparatus by a support group, whether it be denominational ('Alawite, Maronite) or tribal (a royal dynasty or village that comes to dominate a country, like the Tikrit in Iraq). From the establishment of the Afghan state on the basis of a tribal confederation (1747-1978) until the communist *coup d'état* in 1978 and rebel resistance, Afghanistan is steeped in this problematic. Each of these upheavals has been made in the name of a universalistic ideology (nationalism, Marxism, fundamentalism *cum* Islamicism), but the political forms they take demonstrate the enduring importance of solidary groups. A stable and autonomous Marxist regime will not emerge in this context. If the resistence is defeated, Afghanistan will become a Soviet province, without the legal status. If, on the other hand, the resistence succeeds, its future will be played out in the complex dialectic between traditional segmentation of society and the emergence of state forms (a political party, embryonic army and centralized administration).

It is interesting to compare the Afghan resistance and the Rif war (1921-1926) which, except for the question of the Sufi brotherhoods, are quite similar. Was the Rif war, we may wonder, the "last colonial campaign, or the first revolutionary war?"[6] Likewise, is the Afghan resistance the last war of the basmachis — those traditionalist rebels who led a rear-guard resistence against the Sovietization of central Asia between 1920 and 1939 — or is it rather the first stage of an awakening of Islam in the lands of the Soviet empire, which will in due course produce forms of organization at once modern and anchored in tradition: the modernity of a State constructed on the basis of a party and an ideology, the tradition of Islam as it infuses daily life? The Afghan rebels are no longer the basmachis, any more than the Soviets are bolsheviks. Indeed, the war in

5. On this point see Souhayr Belhassen, "Femmes islamistes tunisiennes," in *Le Maghreb musulman* (CNRS, 1981).

6. For an enlightening treatment of this comparison, see Jean-Paul Charney, *Techniques et géosociologie* (Anthropos, 1984). Points of comparison are: the desire to pass beyond tribal segmentation by the imposition of the *Shari'at*, the setting up of a state apparatus, the search for international legitimacy, the confusion between nationalism (Rif? Moroccan?) and Islamic legitimacy, the reference to an ideology and political perspective (p. 61), but also the persistence of tribal segmentation, of forms of traditional warfare and of a daily tribal politic, on the part of Abd el-Krim, at the same time that he seeks to transcend tribalism. This is precisely the political stance of the Afghan resistence. And Abd el-Krim, like the Afghan Islamicists before the Soviet invasion, was met with the mistrust of the *'ulama*.

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Afghanistan marks a new stage in the history of central Asia. We can illuminate it by reference to the past, but we must understand what is new in it, too, even if, as for Abd el-Krim, the resilient features of traditional society are what carry it forth.

FOURIER AND COMPUTER DATING

by Joan Roelofs

The spirit of computer dating, lacking only the technology, was one of a number of schemes by which Charles Fourier wanted to radically transform human sexual relations. Early 19th century socialist thought, socialist movements and experiments were concerned with the entire catalog of miseries afflicting humankind. Monogamy and all its woes figured far more prominently than surplus value, which (according to pharmacists' records) was rarely the cause of suicidal depression. The Marxist tradition, while paying lip service to the "utopian" critique of bourgeois society, repressed most of the "cultural" concerns of early socialism.

The utopians did not ignore or accept capitalism; it was a major evil, but not necessarily the *source* of all the other evils. Therefore, they did not imagine that the abolition of capitalism would automatically produce a brave new world. Rather, they very *practically* attempted to transform dehumanizing institutions. In contrast, the messianic overtone of much of the Marxist tradition makes it appear to be the "utopian" one.

Fourier is of particular interest for two reasons. The first was an event in the scholarly world. Certain of Fourier's works, considered too wild and woolly, had been suppressed by his followers. They were first published in France in 1967, under the title: *Le nouveau monde amoureux* (*The New Amorous World* — Vol. VII of the *Oeuvres completes de Charles Fourier*, Anthropos Edition). This material is outrageous and hilarious, manic and prophetic.

Even without this newly discovered material, Fourier is relevant. He was chiefly recognized by Marx and Engels for his feminism, but his doctrine is also the quintessence of "Small is Beautiful" and "Make Love, Not War." He was intensely concerned with the degradation of the environment; poverty amidst plenty; the unhealthy, immoral and/or boring nature of most work; problems of loneliness, especially among the aged; the repression of women, both sexually and intellectually; the failure of marriage to achieve any of its supposed purposes; and violence, whether of the individual (which he believed the result of repression) or militaristic nationalism. He opposed both violent revolution and imperialism. He did not equate economic development with progress. What is more, he had creative solutions to all of these problems. His hedonistic utopia, a steady state economy, was liberally graced with gastronomy, flowers, sex and music — highly renewable resources.

Fourier was an important influence in 19th and 20th century socialism in Russia; feminism as well as the ideal of communal living were basic premises in the revolu-

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tionary movement.[1] The Bolsheviks, however, had by the early 1930s purged the utopian aspects of socialism, basing their policies on centralization, economic growth and the traditional family.[2] Today, these values are deeply embedded in Soviet society.

At this point, a brief look at Fourier's doctrine is in order. Fourier believed that people were born with certain personality types, based on their dominant passions. There were twelve basic passions: the five sensual appetites; four appetites of the soul: friendship, love, family and ambition; and three distributive passions: the cabalist (love of intrigues), butterfly (love of change and contrast) and composite (desire to combine pleasure of sense and soul). The superior individuals were the ones with the greatest complexity, and the largest number of dominant passions. Fourier believed that all passions, manias and desires were good (otherwise God wouldn't have created them). With the proper organization of society, no repression would be necessary. All tastes could be made socially useful or at least innocuous. The basic unit of Fourier's utopian world, "Harmony" was to be the Phalanx, a community of about 1600 people. This would result in the inclusion of all the basic personality types, useful for the proper arrangements of work and love.

Fourier allowed for considerable inequality in his phalanx. Conspicuous consumption was also a pleasure that should not be denied: "Lucullus is the captain of the group of red cherry-growers, and Scaurus heads the group of maroon cherry-growers. Competition encourages these two rivals to spend as much on their groups as a prince would spend on his country villa. They provide their groups with wagons and sheds that are more splendid than those we see on stage at the opera. Each of them has a magnificent pavillion constructed in the cherry-orchard at his own expense to replace the modest shed furnished by the regency."[3] Fourier thought there would be three classes of dining room, catering to those with greater or lesser refinement of taste. However, everyone was guaranteed an adequate minimum of food, lodging, clothing, medical care, education, entertainment and sex; no one starved amidst luxury, as in "Civilization" (Fourier's name for the current world). Even the third-class dining room had excellent quality and great variety of food, and improvement in gastronomic discernment was projected. In Harmony, Spartan surroundings would be available only for those who had a passion for that sort of thing. "The poorest wretch in Harmony, a man who doesn't have a penny to his name, has a well-heated and enclosed portico at his disposal when he gets into a carriage; he goes from the Palace to the stables by means of paved and graveled underground passage-ways; he gets from his lodgings to the public halls and workshops by means of street-galleries which are heated in winter and ventilated in summer."[4] The phalanx was to be generally self-sufficient, but not self-contained. There would be trade, partying, and joint enterprises with the rest of the world. Freedom and pleasure would dominate life; yet work would get done, and a high degree of organization would prevail.

How was this possible? Work would be pleasant and constantly varied. People would be drawn to those types of work which satisfied their particular combination of passions. Much drudgery would be eliminated through communal living, and "surplus value" eliminated by ending the need to support middlemen, idlers, bureaucrats

1. Martin Malia, *Alexander Herzen and the Birth of Russian Socialism* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1961), p. 321.

2. N.A. Miliutin, *Sotsgorod: The Problem of Building Socialist Cities* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1974).

3. Charles Fourier, *The Utopian Vision of Charles Fourier: Selected Texts on Work, Love and Passionate Attractions,* trans, and ed. J. Beecher and R. Bienvenu (Boston: Beacon, 1971), p. 294.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 243.

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— twelve classes of parasites in all, including armies and navies: "The apparatus of men and machines which is called an army spends its time producing nothing and waiting to be used for destructive purposes . . ."[5] Work would be full of enticements and allurements: competition, sex and pageantry might be part of the job.

A major occupation in Harmony would be horticulture, which along with domestic animal raising, gamekeeping, and fishfarming, would supply a large part of the diet. Fourier was not much interested in the growing of grain, (perhaps because he couldn't digest bread), and Harmony thereby avoided the superstructure of a grain based diet, which tends to be centralized and hierarchical, if not imperialistic. Gardening allows for the maximum control and participation by the eaters.

Manufacturing would be limited; Fourier did not feel that it could be made very attractive work. Besides: "According to this science [political economy] all industries are useful as long as they create legions of starving men to sell themselves at bargain prices to conquerors and shop bosses. Excessive competition always reduces the populace to the lowest wages when there is work and to indigence during periods of economic stagnation."[6] He desired to achieve "1) The greatest possible consumption of different kinds of foods; 2) The smallest possible consumption of different kinds of clothing and furniture . . ." This would be possible by producing goods of extremely high quality: ". . . furniture and clothing will last an extremely long time. They will become *eternal*."[7]

Fourier's educational system, centering on opera and gastronomy, introduced children to the combination of work, study and pleasure. For example, in regard to the shelling and sorting of peas: "This work which with us would occupy the hands of people of thirty, will be consigned to children of two, three, four years of age: the hall is provided with inclined tables containing a number of hollows; two little ones are seated at the raised side; they take the peas out of the shell, the inclination of the table causes the grains to roll toward the lower side where three tots are placed of twenty-five, thirty, thirty-five months, charged with the task of sorting, and furnished with special implements.

The thing to be done is to separate the smallest peas for the sweetened ragout, the medium ones for the bacon ragout, and the largest for the soup . . . . If civilized education developed in every child its natural inclinations, we should see nearly all rich children enamoured of various very plebeian occupations, such as that of the mason, the carpenter, the smith, the saddler."[8] Some of the disgusting work which needed to be done would be the province of the "Little Hordes," composed of children who have a penchant for filth (Fourier estimated that ⅔ of the boys ⅓ of the girls would enroll themselves in this corps).

Except for sleeping (and he thought one wouldn't need much of that), Fourier believed that no occupation should be pursued for more than two hours at a time. Necessary dangerous work, as in chemical plants and glass works, would be rotated so that one person might spend only two or three hours a week in those places. Regular rotation among jobs would not only make work less taxing and more interesting, it would also build solidarity and promote equality. One day Simone and Pierre would be in competitive pear-growing groups, but the next day they would have to pull

5. *Ibid.*, p. 132.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 289.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 288.
8. Charles Fourier, *Design for Utopia: Selected Writings of Charles Fourier* (New York: Schocken, 1971), p. 72.

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together in a wine-making brigade, or on a laundry line. Each person would experience close work relations with hundreds of people in the Phalanx, as well as with outsiders in joint projects and in "industrial" armies (actually, conservation armies, or peace corps, as they undertook reforestation, building embankments, etc., and were very friendly to the"natives"). Furthermore, the leader of one group might be a novice in several others; authority and subordination would be rotated. Note that Fourier did not abolish expertise or leadership, or adopt consensus as a procedure. He rather proposed a method close to the Aristotelian ideal of participation — ruling and being ruled in turn.

Variety in work and play was not to be achieved by chance. Every evening: "[E]very individual must go to the Exchange to arrange his work and pleasure sessions for the following days. It is there that he makes plans concerning his gastronomic and amorous meetings and, especially, for his work sessions in the shops and fields. Everyone has at least twenty sessions to arrange, since he makes definite plans for the following day and tentative ones for the day after.

Assuming that 1200 individuals are present, and that each one has twenty sessions to arrange, this means that in the meeting as a whole there are 24,000 transactions to be concluded. Each of these transactions can involve 20, 40, or 100 individuals who must be consulted and intrigued with or against."[9] While Fourier insisted he had a system worked out for processing all this, the place cries out for a computer. Such are the bare bones of Fourier's society; let us get on to the flesh.

His approach to love-life was also radical and likewise in need of a computer. Unlike other early socialists (e.g., Owenite) who traced the source of misery to marriage, religion, private property and the state, Fourier actually devised some creative substitutes for marriage. His schemes are worth examining as his perspective was unusual — he was a feminist and a sexually deprived person (never married, or much of anything else).

Fourier's views contrast with the usual socialist (Owenite or Marxian) position on this issue: the advocacy of "free love" or serial monogamy. For the latter, relations (among socialists before, and everyone after, the revolution) should be based on romantic love. Engels' view is typical: "If only marriages that are based on love are moral, then, also, only those are moral in which love continues. The duration of the urge of individual sex love differs very much according to the individual, particularly among men; and a definite cessation of affection, or its displacement by a new passionate love, makes separation a blessing for both parties as well as for society. People will only be spared the experience of wading through the useless mire of divorce proceedings."[10] All socialists assumed that maintenance for children and mothers would be provided in some way independent of a current liaison. This is very useful for men who have a tendency to seduce and abandon; an occurrence not unknown on the left. The problem with the laissez-faire view of love is that it is no more a guarantee of general happiness than is the corresponding economic doctrine. In both realms, those who are in a strong market position will benefit. In the love market, these tend to be older high status males (radical or otherwise) and young beautiful women, especially if they are compliant. The socialist advocacy of "free love" retains most of the disadvantages of legalized monogamy, without any of its advantages.

Feminists of the early 19th century in the Owenite movement were not thrilled by

9. *Utopian Vision, op. cit.*, p. 253.

10. F. Engels, *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, in Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. II (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1951), p. 218.

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the prevailing free love theories and practices. On the one hand, they were sometimes treated as playthings. On the other hand, "serious" relationships carried special risks for women: "Loving men, women became hostages to their own hearts, incapable even of willing their freedom — 'sentimental slaves,' . . ."[11] One hundred years later, this was echoed by Alexandra Kollontai, the left-wing Bolshevik, who with her fellow revolutionaries had long since been liberated from legal marriage. It was the "love" part of "free love" which she found oppressive to women: "Love with its many disappointments, with its tragedies and eternal demands for perfect *happiness* still played a very great role in my life. An all-too-great role! It was an expenditure of precious time and energy, fruitless and, in the final analysis, utterly worthless . . . . Our mistake was that *each time we succumbed to the belief that we had finally found the one and only in the man we loved*, the person with whom we believed we could blend our soul, one who was ready fully to recognize us as a spiritual-physical force.

But *over and over again things turned out differently, since* the man always tried to impose his ego upon us and adapt us fully to his purposes."[12]

Kollontai had hopes that in the future women would be able to avoid these traps and engage in truly equal relationships, where love would not diminish them and their work. However, the experience of women revolutionaries with "free love" has been frequently unhappy, e.g., the case of Rosa Luxemburg.[13] The Bohemian women of Greenwich Village in the 1900-1914 period found their status was often totally dependent on their being pleasing to men.[14] Without institutional support of any kind, the "love bond" had to bear enormous weight. As it happened, many of the "liberated" men had ego needs which required an association with a beautiful, intelligent, radical and totally subordinate woman.[15] The New Left saw the story repeated: "As in the 1920s, sexual revolution became a license for male promiscuity and female accessibility."[16] Many radical feminists have come to believe that love is impossible for a liberated woman, given the social and psychological framework of male domination — female subordination which surrounds that social artifact.[17]

A frequent criticism of marriage and family is that it weakens or makes impossible the bonds of true community. Preliminary study of evidence from the utopian settlements of 19th century America has shown this to be the case; monogamy tended to disrupt communities. Those societies which practiced either celibacy or organized group marriage avoided such disruptions.[18] Similarly in 20th century communes, uncoupling and recoupling frequently led to the withdrawal of some of the parties from the community.

There are also the usual indictments of the family as an institution for raising

11. Barbara Taylor, *Eve and the New Jerusalem* (New York: Pantheon, 1983), p. 48.
12. Alexandra Kollontai, *The Autobiography of a Sexually Emancipated Communist Woman* (New York: Schocken, 1975), pp. 6-7.
13. Elzbieta Ettinger, *Comrade and Lover: Rosa Luxemburg's Letters to Leo Jogiches* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1979).
14. Ann Snitow, Christine Stansell and Sharon Thompson, ed., *Powers of Desire: The Politics of Sexuality* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1983), p. 17.
15. E.K. Trimberger, "Feminism, Men and Modern Love: Greenwich Village 1900-1925," *Ibid.*
16. Snitow *et. al., op. cit.*, p. 20.
17. Elizabeth Rapaport "On the Future of Love: Rousseau and the Radical Feminists," in Carol Gould and Marx Wartofsky, eds., *Women and Philosophy: Toward a Theory of Liberation* (New York: Putnam, 1980).
18. R. Muncy, *Sex and Marriage in Utopian Communities: 19th Century America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973).

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children. As Fourier saw it: "In the family system children spend all their time crying, quarreling, breaking things and refusing to work."[19] For socialists and feminists there is the additional problem of the family's role in the transmission of sexist, classist, authoritarian attitudes from one generation to the next. These negative inheritances are all the more likely in "happy" families with "well-adjusted" spouses.

Fourier shared many of these attitudes and delighted in compiling catalogs on the evils of monogamy. The wastefulness of individual households was compounded by the oppression of women which they entail: "Are not women destined to exhibit in literature and the arts the same capacity they have exhibited on the throne, when, from the days of Semiramis to Catherine, there have been *seven great queens to one of inferior capacity, while among kings, seven have been incapable, to one that has been great?* The same rule would hold good in literature and the arts; the female sex will carry off the palm in these departments, when, in the combined order, education shall have restored woman to the use of her facilities, smothered by a social system which engrosses her in the complicated functions of our isolated households."[20]

Monogamy was oppressive to men as well as to women. Fourier drew up a scale of misfortunes in married life: "K Widowerhood. 1. Chance of unhappiness. 2. Disparity of tastes. 3. Complications. 4. Expense. 5. Vigilance. 6. Monotony. Y Sterility. KK Compound Orphanhood. 7. Discord in education. 8. Jobs and dowries. 9. Departure of children. 10. Disappointing in-laws. 11. Incorrect information. 12. Adultery or cuckoldry. YY False Paternity."[21] Unhappy as the married are, those who are not also suffer deprivation. Fourier was especially concerned for the unmarried young and old, and those of any age who were unattached for any reason (including unattractiveness or unusual tastes). He did not consider prostitution an acceptable alternative; its cash nexus precluded the refinements he sought in relationships. What Fourier proposed was a new amorous order, in which marriage would be abolished, child care and housework collectivized, and a "sexual minimum" the right of all.

Fourier believed that there were many different kinds of love: sentimental, long term lust, short term lust, bisexual attractions, group arrangements (including "quadrille") and all were worthy of expression. Complexity was the perfection of individuals; it could also create bonds of love forming a worldwide network and leading to universal peace. There would be no jealousy in Harmony and no hard feelings. All past and present lovers would retain affectionate ties. World unity would be promoted by conclaves of those from the ends of the earth who shared some exotic and rare mania (or unusual tastes in food).

Redistribution of wealth would be fostered. Fourier describes the imaginary case of a wealthy woman, Artemise, whose personality type — omnigyne — gives her a tendency to carry on eight affairs simultaneously: "Consequently at the age of eighty she will have loved . . . about 1200 men and 600 women . . . . In making her will, Artemise leaves a sum of three million to her lovers . . ."[22] There were plentiful opportunities for choice of pleasure and partner in Harmony, but there would also be a good deal of organization, so that no one would be left out or miss out on an unobvious but appropriate match. Fourier believed that when the need for sexual gratification was not fulfilled, social disorders resulted, just as they might from the denial of subsis-

19. *Utopian Vision, op. cit.*, p. 99.
20. Charles Fourier, *Harmonian Man: Selected Writings of Charles Fourier*, ed. Mark Poster (Garden City: Anchor, 1971), p. 210.
21. *Utopian Vision, op. cit.*, p. 179.
22. *Harmonian Man, op. cit.*, p. 228.

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tence. Once physical gratification was assured, love could develop in all its nobility and refinement.

How was the minimum to be assured? To some extent, Fourier expected his society to produce conditions in which everyone would get into the act. "First love is said to leave a lasting impression. Thus the free play of this passion is particularly important in Harmony. Since the choice is free, there will be relatively few lads who become passionately attached to lasses of their own age. Nature loves contrasts and readily links people of disparate ages. Furthermore, so many friendly relations are established in Harmony between people of widely divergent ages that it will become commonplace for a young lad to begin his amorous career with an elderly woman and for a young girl to begin with a mature man. Of course there is nothing predetermined about the matter since everyone's choice will be free . . ."[23] More persuasive aids to assortment would be provided by the rules of love and the "courts" which enforced them. Young people voluntarily enrolled in the "Damselate" were expected to practice fidelity "until they have finished their education."[24] But: ". . . [N]o one is expelled from the Damselate until he or she has committed three infidelities and one inconsistancy . . . . Only half an infidelity is counted if a Damsel has an affair with one of the priests or priestesses who, in view of their age, are given special advantages . . . . A homosexual affair is only counted as half an infidelity . . . . Any Damsel may redeem an infidelity by spending two nights with an elderly priest or priestess."[25] "Angelic couples" — exceptionally handsome and beautiful lovers — would gain glory by sharing themselves with twenty admirers each. "We will see how a pure, refined and transcendent sentimental relationship will not reach physical consummation until the two lovers have had physical relations with all who ardently desire them. We will see how by this act of amorous philanthropy they will obtain the same glory that civilization gives to a Decius or a Regulus and other such martyrs for religious or political principles."[26]

Industrial armies (for reforestation, building embankments, etc.) are mustered with expectations of great festivities. A group of virgins (male and female members of the Vestalate) provide a special attraction, for it is on these campaigns that they choose their first lovers, thereupon entering into the Damselate. Another group, Bacchants and Bacchantes, are charged with "recovering the wounded," i.e., spending a few days taking care of the rejected suitors. Enrollment in any of these orders is voluntary, but once enrolled certain rules must be obeyed or punishments are imposed, which turn out to be acts of sexual "philanthropy."

The use of computers could increase productivity in Fourier's world. One of his scenarios has a thousand adventurers and adventuresses visiting a Phalanx in Cnidos. Upon arrival, each visitor hands over to the high priests and priestesses a written "confession" containing information on his or her particular passions, tastes and recent encounters. A light snack follows, while the "confessors" calculate five or six likely matches for each adventurer. "Sympathetic matching takes everything into account, and the final choices made are those which seem most likely to complement previous encounters either through contrast or identity."[27] There follows a preliminary "skirmish," a general physical encounter of the whole crew. Some will settle down at that time; they

23. *Utopian Vision, op. cit.*, p. 365.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 366.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 367.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 376.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 388.

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are "monogynes" dominated by the passion of touch. "But such relationships, which are no more than simple amorous ties, deriving from purely physical affinities, will satisfy no more than a twentieth of the lovers in Harmony . . . . For the goal of Harmony is to establish compound amorous relationships based on both physical and spiritual affinities."[28] Most will then proceed to the reconnoitering room: "The individual has been given a list with precise information concerning the spiritual affinities and temporary inclinations of each of his potential partners. He is also able to determine their physical attraction since they are right before his eyes and since he has perhaps already gotten acquainted with them during the introductory bacchanalia . . ."[29] Conflicts will be minimized and resolvable in various satisfactory ways: "The whole point of the operations of the court of love is to determine these spiritual sympathies at the very outset in order to minimize competition for the most physically attractive individuals. Such competition leaves some people with throngs of admirers and leaves a great many other people in a state of abandonment."[30] "No final decisions will be made until everyone has had a chance to converse with all his or her candidates. Everyone must have a chance to present himself to those he desires and to inspect the information recorded on their escutcheons concerning their personalities, their habits, current caprices, most recent passions, and their need of alternating and contrasting pleasures."[31] Along the way elaborate precautions are taken to make sure no one's feelings are hurt. Often the Confessors and Confessoresses (who are generally older people) will have to intervene directly to assist clients with special needs. Although Fourier assumes effective contraception is no problem there is one shadow to darken the general merriment: "I cannot repeat too often, however, that customs so alien to ours cannot be established during the first years of Harmony. It will first be necessary to purge the globe of syphilis and other skin diseases. Until this is accomplished. Harmony will be more circumspect about love than civilization now is."[32]

Fourier has tempered liberty with equality. His precise schemes, complete with Chief Fairies, Pontiffs, Fakirs, Confessoresses, etc., are certainly outlandish, but the spirit of devising alternatives to monogamy or "free love" would be a reasonable project. On the one hand, either marriage or the lack of it is a major source of misery in "civilization." One is not here advocating the abolition of marriage; in our existing society marriage as well as property is already done away with for nine tenths of the population. This is possibly a result of the "flight from commitment" fostered perhaps by the increasing ratio of women to men.[33] In any case, the disintegration of marriage seems to be a phenomenon of advanced countries. Yet marriage and the family are such central institutions that their gradual disintegration is bound to have serious consequences for a society — as well as for the individuals concerned. Fourier contrived institutions to replace marriage, with the added advantage that they provided an ideal diversion for a steady state economy, being based on renewable resources.

But what of love, it might be asked? Many may believe in it, but along with Santa Claus and God, evidence supposedly supporting the phenomenon may be explained

28. *Ibid.*, p. 390.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 391.
30. *Ibid.*
31. *Ibid.*, p. 393.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 395.
33. Barbara Ehrenreich, "The Male Revolt: After the Breadwinner Vanishes," *Nation*, Feb. 26, 1983, pp. 239-242; Marcia Guttentag and Paul Secord, *Too Many Women: The Sex Ratio Question* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1983).

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in other ways. The concept would appear to provide more costs than benefits. An incredible amount of time, energy, and capital is spent in the largely haphazard process of mate selection (both for short term and long term undertakings). The results of this "system" are not impressive. The divorce rate understates the general level of misery, to say nothing of those whose search has been fruitless. One might rejoinder that an externality of this process is "fun." So it might be for prom kings and queens, but what about the indubitably larger group that never saw the inside of a prom, or did so only by dint of a *deus ex machina* in the form of a cousin? Some resort to commercial computer services or traditional shadchonim, but such a system cries out for universality. These stopgap measures are as irrational as the thousands of employment agencies operating in the same market. Furthermore, many people (even intelligent ones) would rather settle for what comes around the corner than apply rationality to this quest.

Some may regard the rational creation of new institutions as a folly or tyranny. However, the use of social science to promote the happiness of humankind was the original objective of socialism as well as that of political science itself since Plato. Increasing rationality and predictability can enhance both freedom and equality; it is the strong who chiefly benefit from laissez-faire conditions. Furthermore, the creation of new institutions — which can always be modified by experience — can prefigure the values of the good society.

Appendix: Urgèle et Valère

Harold is twenty, Maude is eighty. Loving Harold, she discovers he has a natural aversion to responding. Let us see how the ties of circumstances can triumph over this repugnance, by opposing it with four affectionate ties: two amicable ties (A) and two federative ties (F).

A1-Harold is a member of forty groups, in several of which he is in a very close relationship with Maude. Since he was five, he has been in the blue hyacinth group, and he has excelled in it. He owes his talent to Maude, president of the group. She has been his devoted instructor and has taught him all the refinements of the art.

A2-Harold is learning engraving; his efforts have been highly praised. Again, it is to Maude that he owes his glory. Dean of the group, she has been happy to instruct him as she has recognized his potential at an early age.

F3-Harold has a penchant for a science totally unknown in Civilization, the algebra of love or the calculus of fortuitous sympathies in love. It is the art of matching, by their passions, a mass of men and women who have never seen each other, so that each of the 100 men will identify right away which of the 100 women he will love, perfectly suit in mind and spirit, and match in character and even idiosyncratic fantasies. This science requires long practice along with theory. Maude, who is the most skilled "sympathist" in the country, teaches Harold. It is on Maude that he pins his hopes for success in this science, which carries great rewards in fame and fortune.

A4-Harold wants to join an industrial army (about 300,000 people, of whom 100,000 are women) which is going to campaign on the Rhine during the lush springtime to construct bridges and embankments. There will be magnificent parties every evening. To be admitted, Harold needs to have been on eight campaigns; he has been on only two. He is ineligible, unless an exception is made.

Maude is the High Matron (or Chief Fairy) of the Rhine army, heading the Department of Fortuituous Sympathies for the 300,000 men and women. She states that

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Harold would help her in this work. An exception is made for him; he will be admitted to this lovely army, although his prerequisites are lacking. He leaves as attaché in the Office of Chief Fairy.

There are these four bonds between Harold and Maude, which tend to deflect any natural repugnance: two affectionate bonds for past services and two federative bonds for future services. The result will be to stir up in Harold, not direct love for Maude, but an outpouring of gratitude, indirect affinity, neutral links, which take the place of love, and will lead to the same result. Maude will get Harold by pure affection. The eighty years will not be a barrier for Harold; he has been used to being with Maude since he was young. Youth is intrepid in love with enough stimulation, and Harold tells Maude right away that he would be happy to make tribute for everything that he owes to her. He will not become her constant lover, just her cake from time to time. It will be for Maude a conquest without selfish or sordid motives, very different from those made today by eighty year old women, who can only have young men by paying for it (freely translated from Fourier)."[34]

34. *Vers la liberté en amour*, ed. Daniel Guérin (Paris: Gallimard, 1975), pp. 230-232.

A STRAGEGY OF CONTAINMENT: CENTER AND MARGIN IN *DESPERATELY SEEKING SUSAN**

by Mas'ud Zavarzadeh

In her film, *Desperately Seeking Susan*, Susan Seidelman continues her inquiry into the relations between the "center" and the "margin" in contemporary culture. The ideology of the film represents the center — the status quo — as the site for mature negotiations of communal values, whereas it constructs the margin — the locus of opposition — as an instance of self-indulgence, transgression, and extremity. This is the same theme in her first film, *Smithereens*. This fascination with the tension between the center and the margin is interesting in that it enacts the "politics of reluctance" of fairly successful upper bourgeois who in their youth learned a political language and a set of attitudes now being tested in their middle years by new political "realities." They are finding out that their original neoliberal political stance is fraught with contradictions and cannot guide them through the paradoxes of postmodern capitalism. Their political position locates them on the cultural periphery while their daily practices commit them to the very cultural center they seek to challenge. Thus, they continually return to the very practices they thought they had rejected. Although most of these people are still reluctant to follow some of their former friends who have long since denounced the margin and returned to the center, their actual politics support the status quo. Thus, *Desperately Seeking Susan* can be seen as a means through which the real contradictions that confront the postmodern liberal bourgeoisie are "resolved" in aesthetic terms.

The film resolves these contradictions by universalizing them. It points up other contradictory moments, especially when it openly challenges the central cultural

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values in politics, sexuality and ethics. Consequently, the historically specific contradictions of upper bourgeois professionals are seen as inevitable, general and almost "natural." The more such contradictions are identified in other social groups, the more their historical specificity is suppressed.

In *Smithereens*, Seidelman depicted the bohemian life in the East Village as inherently contradictory. The main character, Wren, implied that the margin was parasitic and essentially "fake," thus unworthy of the attention of mature persons whose daily life unfolds within the center. In *Desperately Seeking Susan* Seidelman once again seeks to resolve the contradictions of upper middle-class professionals by unveiling the inconsistencies in the life-style of a marginal woman who has moved so far from the center that, unless she is exposed as a "fake," her appeal may raise fundamental questions about the center. In spite of the easy sense of humor in the film, Seidelman's intensely moral and sternly didactic vision aims to show that such a distance from the center is in principle unachievable and that Susan (the film's independent character) is merely pretending to be an outsider. She is actually a self-indulgent phony with no sense of the complexities of mature life. It is significant that the first shot of Susan in the film is one of self-adoration. She is seen lying on the floor of a luxurious hotel room taking pictures of herself. Having presented Susan as narcissistic, the next scene shows her "moral character." She is stealing a pair of beautiful earrings from the man with whom she has spent the night, as well as taking various other items such as silverware from the hotel room. She then leaves him asleep, and he is subsequently murdered by a hit man looking for the priceless earrings. Susan is thus depicted both as a thief and as a selfish woman living off people she discards once she is through with them. This theft, however, transcends the "meaning" the film assigns to it. Susan steals the earrings not because they are priceless (she is unaware that they are missing museum treasures said to have belonged to Nefertiti), but because they are highly ornate additions to the rest of her junk jewelry. This theft symbolizes her values which differ not only from the center but also from those of the hit man with whom the film attempts to associate her.

Seidelman is enthusiastic, energetic, humorous and thoughtful — but only like someone deeply insecure who has to think in order to deal with uncertainties and thus avoid costly mistakes. Consequently, *Desperately Seeking Susan* exhibits an anxiety that propels the narrative forward while inhibiting discoveries out of a fear of unexpected surprises.

The ostensible narrative of the film evolves around a cultural cliché: the wife of a hot-tub salesman, who is more interested in making television commercials than in talking with his wife, who in turn becomes bored with her comfortable suburban life and, in order to escape her terrible loneliness, starts fantasizing about an exciting romantic world. The young, bored housewife, Roberta, seeks the passion and freedom symbolized by Susan — an outsider whose life is determined by her marginality. Unlike Roberta who is tied down to her house in Fort Lee, New Jersey, Susan has no home, and this leads to the dangerous assumption that she therefore is the owner of all homes whose use she freely demands. She thus threatens the very principle of private property. All those who let her use their homes beg her not to abuse their possessions or steal from them. This concern with private property also informs Seidelman's earlier *Smithereens* which opens with Wren stealing a pair of sunglasses. When not taking over her friend's apartments, Susan spends her nights in hotels freeloading off the men she stays with until they get "serious," i.e., until the relation begins to lose its freedom and marginality and becomes constrained by the restrictions of life in the cen-

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ter. Unlike Roberta, who appears as an emblem of innocence, Susan is even mistrusted by her friends. Repeatedly, they implore her not to do anything wild that might interfere with the routines of their lives. While Roberta is shown at home in, e.g., a beauty salon, Susan lives out of a bus locker at the Port Authority Bus Terminal. All of Susan's acts undermine and challenge the center. This is precisely what the film seeks to question as "immature," "irresponsible," and finally "amusing," thus legitimizing the center.

Yet, Susan's marginal life-style fascinates the center. Although Susan's challenge unfolds in the film in terms of life-style, it does have major political implications. It is precisely in response to such implications that Roberta is attracted to her: Susan defies the bourgeois code of love. Such defiance eventually undermines domesticity and the relation between Roberta and her husband, Gary, propelling Roberta to search for Susan. The film's main aim is to neutralize the political implications of the defiant marginal life.

To achieve this, the film constructs Susan as exotic by depicting her life as "attractive" but ultimately frivolous. She is made an embodiment of otherness living in a world so remote from normal life that none of her actions have any consequences for normal people. As someone has put it, in Susan's world "Yuppie women. . .need not apply, though they may. . .press their noses at the window and consider their option." Roberta does press her nose at the window, and it is to steer her away from Susan as a seductive option that the film transforms her into the inaccessible exotic who can be watched from afar but never used as a model. In order to widen the gap between Susan and Roberta the film turns Susan into the "weird." She dresses in a manner that no conventional woman would dream of emulating: stretch-lace tights and tops; bare midriff; exposed underwear; micro-mini skirts and layers of junk jewelry. But, above all, who wears a sequined jacket emblazoned on its back with the "alien" erotic symbol of a pyramid. Since she does not fetishize clothing, as soon as she is attracted to a pair of gold-lame boots, she trades the jacket for them. She celebrates experience and does not embalm it in objects. The ideological frame of the film, however, demands that the proliferation of meanings be contained. Thus, the film makes Susan so exotic that her attraction is naturalized as merely "charming." The audience is allowed to enjoy this "charm," but at the same time the film banishes it to the sphere of the frivolous while ascribing seriousness to the non-exotic center. Such strategies separate margin and center, preventing otherness from mixing with the ordinary. As a result, the unfamiliar is prevented from having any defamiliarizing impact on the familiar.

The film, however, does not locate the values of the center in obvious places such as Fort Lee, where Roberta and her husband live. Rather, it discovers them in such unexpected places as a backalley Chinatown loft and among seemingly marginal figures such as Dez — Roberta's new lover. The film exoticizes and thus trivializes Susan by inquiring into her love-life and opposing it to Roberta's. The latter's initial dissatisfaction with her life is articulated in this emotional space where she starts her search for an alternative. Susan, on the other hand, is depicted as utterly casual about love — not only does she sleep around but her steadiest love relation is conducted in a terrifyingly playful manner. She and her boyfriend have no stable meeting place nor do they have a regular meeting time. Whenever he wants to find her, he places an ad in *The Personals* announcing "Desperately Seeking Susan" to which Susan responds: the ultimate romantic rendezvous. This is an intriguing, playful, but as Roberta soon discovers, a very irresponsbile way to treat "love."

The fragmentary spaces of *The Personals* form an exemplary urban collage of loneli-

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ness and the pursuit of romance. Roberta's voyeuristic imagination turns these ads into gateways to a world of fantasy, fulfillment and freedom. Roberta and Susan are "connected" in the interstices of these personal notices, and it is among the fragments of the ads and the sites they specify for the rendezvous in the streets of lower Manhattan that Roberta first glimpses Susan. She follows Susan through these streets, unseen, fascinated by Susan's "exoticism." Roberta's quiet chasing after Susan exemplifies the film's trajectory: the desire that Roberta's peers have for the moving margin, but their inability to relocate there. The closest Roberta comes to Susan in this early stage of their "relation" is in the clothes shop where Susan exchanges her seductive jacket with the pyramid on the back for the pair of gold-lame boots. As soon as Susan leaves, Roberta "buys" Susan's discarded jacket and thus metonymically possesses Susan. She wears the jacket and takes it home where Gary finds it unfathomable that a woman of Roberta's wealth should think of buying used clothes — obviously oblivious to the jacket's symbolic value.

Seidelman uses various street scenes in lower Manhattan and Battery Park to contrast the shadowy life in the margins of the city and the reality of the center in Fort Lee. On finding a Port Authority bus-locker key in Susan's jacket, Roberta uses *The Personals* to arrange a meeting with Susan in Battery Park where she witnessed Susan's original rendezvous with her lover. Seidelman depicts the park and the streets, like Susan, as charming but dangerous. The audience is given enough clues to be intrigued by life in the postmodern metropolis but is clearly discouraged from living there. The constant danger of city life is brought home by the mob hit-man's attempt to run down Roberta who he mistakes for Susan. The hit-man is seeking the wearer of the pyramid jacket — Susan, whom he saw leaving an Atlantic City motel room just before he threw her latest lover out the window — in order to retrieve the "hot" Nefertiti earrings Susan took. In attacking Roberta, however, he merely causes her to hit her head and suffer amnesia.

The idea of "amnesia as a plot crux in 1985!" has outraged film critics who have naturalized *Desperately Seeking Susan* as a realistic film. The use of such plot devices, however, is significant: the device exemplifies the film's crucial notion that one cannot be conscious and at the same time live an imaginative life. "Adult life" does not allow Roberta such a combination. So, to be able to experience the "other," she has to literally forget the "same." The implausible plot device, therefore, reveals the incongruities in upper middle-class life — forgetfulness as the condition for a relaxed self-knowing. This theme is repeated in Roberta's house when Gary, her husband, smokes a joint with Susan and, in a rambling dialog, forgets Roberta. Both Roberta and her husband, in order to escape the dreariness of their bourgeois life, have to experience amnesia. The other side of this, of course, is that Susan and her boyfriend, who is always on the road, are in a constant amnesia. Their "freedom" is nothing but the forgetting of adult responsibilities so that the margin turns out to be merely an escape from the center.

Roberta's amnesia opens up for her an entirely new space of freedom. As she is soon to discover, however, it is a rather confusing realm. The domain of fantasy in which she is allowed to become that incongruous combination, Susan-Roberta, a blurring of lines between the center and the margin that the film tries to demonstrate is, in reality, impossible: it threatens the film's underlying ideology. In this middle part of the film the margin and center are so mixed up that the effect is either farcical or immensely painful. The confusion gradually becomes so unbearable that a clear unbinding of the two and a restoration of the purity of the center becomes inevitable. In the meantime, this fantastic space allows Seidelman to poke fun at the margin and to teach Roberta a

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lesson. It also enables her to reject the Roberta-Susan figure and to lead the audience to yearn for the decomposition of this figure (with some modifications) into a clear-cut Susan or Roberta.

Roberta's underground adventures recycle Wren's wanderings in *Smithereens* where she is kicked out of her own apartment, the homes of relatives and the flats of her bohemian friends. At the end of this series of displacements, in a rather cliché freeze-frame, Wren is shown heading towards New Jersey (home) when she realizes she cannot go back. So, she gets into a car to spend the night with a "john" and presumably starts her new life as a prostitute. The underside of the middle-class hypostatization of love is that prostitution awaits all women who transgress bourgeois norms. The equation of prostitution with any risk-taking in a women's life evidently haunts Seidelman's imagination because the same motif reappears in *Desperately Seeking Susan*. When searching for Roberta does not yield immediate results, Leslie, Roberta' sister-in-law, speculates that perhaps Roberta is a prostitute — maybe even a lesbian prostitute. These speculations are materialized in a scene in which Roberta, dressed like a "floozy" for her semi-burlesque role as a magician's assistant, gets mugged by the same hit man, who is still following Roberta-Susan for the earrings, and then is arrested for prostitution by the police, who also refer to her lover, Dez, as her pimp. In the police car (in the hands of the law) the shock she has received from being knocked down sets Roberta-Susan's mind back in order, and Roberta remembers her real name, thus accepting her previous identity. This image reveals the metonymic relation between the police as a repressive state apparatus and identity as a socially enforced "legal fiction."

The ethics of compliance is also at work in the production of the film. In an interview (in the *Village Voice*, April 2, 1985), the "star" of the film, Rosanna Arquette is quoted as saying that "She [Seidelman] was scared if she didn't get results right away, and she had so many people breathing down her neck that she couldn't loosen up." Seidelman's "dream" to "take the best of both worlds," i.e., the codes of both Hollywood and independent film-making, (interview in the *New York Times*, December 26, 1982) is also an expression of the desire for success with the inevitable yielding to the dominant ideology "breathing down her neck." The fact that she has played the role of a compliant woman director to get her film done is clear from several remarks made about the influence of studio exectives in dictating several scences in the film (the *Village Voice*, April 2, 1985).

Seidelman's dilemma here is that in order to be successful, one has to comply with previously rejected values. This makes it all the more urgent for Seidelman to put Susan and other marginal figures insisting on living differently in their places: they are presented as thieves, prostitutes, lesbians, and pimps. Such embodiments of moral degradation and sexual deviation are also part of the exotic. The desire to populate the margin with such figures and to equate this region with the most feared elements is, of course, part of the film's ideology. If the film makes it possible for the audience to "see" that the center is being subverted by a margin consisting of thieves, prostitutes, lesbians, and pimps, then it will generate support for its own ideology: the reaffirmation of the center as the unchallenged locus of ethical values.

Roberta's underground adventures are devised to amuse the audience and thus prevent any reflection concerning the chain of events that befall her. The life on the margin is shown to be violent, dishonest, selfish and an unceasing series of utter silliness. The audience is intimidated by the unfamiliar and is allowed to release that tension only through laughter so that it will not consider examining the unfamiliar.

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However, in the film the most tame part of the margin is recuperated by the center and, in such recuperation, the audience's curiosity about the margin and its attraction to it is satisfied in a self-congratulatory moment of seeming openness to otherness. This recuperation of the harmless part of the margin and its incorporation into the center also takes place in the domain of love.

Roberta-Susan's most significant discovery underground is, of course, her encounter with Dez in whose problematic figure the film deals with another aspect of the relation between the center and the margin. Dez's job as a projectionist in a rundown movie house automatically designates him as a marginal figure. The first time the audience sees Dez he is behind a projector trying to fix a torn film when he gets a call from his friend Jim, who is also Susan's boyfriend, asking him to go to Battery Park to make sure that Susan is all right since a stranger (Roberta) has also placed an ad "Desperately Seeking Susan." Dez responds that he cannot go because "he has a job." The response is reassuring since it indicates that Dez, despite his marginal job, is a "responsible" man. One point, however, is problematic: Dez's refusal to take care of his friend's girl. But that "doubt" about Dez's adherence to the code of loyalty is immediately dispelled by his decision to go to the park anyway, even if it means "borrowing" the scooter of a friend who will become angry with him. Jim in the same call is revealed as a jealous lover and thus really not at all liberated from the code of love valued by the center — he is, in short, a hypocrite. Dez arrives at Battery Park at the symbolic moment that Roberta (mistaken for Susan) loses consciousness. Becoming "unconscious," of course, signals the opening of a desired space for Roberta. What follows is kind of a dream dreamt in waking hours: she is awake but separated from the identity that has made her life so boring.

Since Roberta-Susan is also helpless, Dez, in another act of responsibility, takes her to his loft. The moment of their arrival at his loft also reveals the construction of Dez as a reliable man even though he lives on the margins. They arrive just as Dez's girlfriend, Victoria, is removing everything from the loft as she leaves him for a creepy, effiminate man who is obviously Dez's inferior. Victoria herself is pictured as a "bitch." She is the kind of woman who has no sensitivity to the emotional side of a relation. She offers to send Dez a check for the sentimental objects she is taking — a gesture that only infuriates Dez and once more confirms the cultural "obvious" that money and love have nothing to do with each other. Victoria is pictured as so domineering, mean and petty that she takes not only many of Dez's personal belongings (his past history) but also his full refrigerator (his food and sustenance for the present). His entire life is changed; his home has been destroyed and will have to be reconstructed from the foundation. It is in this context that Roberta's first utterance upon arriving in the bare loft — that it has such good lighting and real possibilities to make a nice home — acquires its ideological resonance. No matter where she is, no matter how much she has seen and suffered, a woman will always be a caring, sensitive homemaker. It is also significant that the first night Roberta and Dez are in the same place they do not sleep together. Dez believes in chastity and loyalty, and his moral character is demonstrated in several shots showing him tossing and turning and pressing himself against the hard floor while resisting his desires for Roberta-Susan. He is a trustworthy person and in many ways resembles people that the audience identifies with; at the same time he is also a detached person who has the added attraction of being a marginal figure — an artist/filmmaker.

While Roberta-Susan is suffering from the confusion of her life on the margin, Susan is portrayed as an opportunist manipulating Gary, who is somewhat belatedly worried

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about Roberta's well-being and is anxiously searching for her. Susan is once again free-loading: eating and having a good time in Fort Lee. Roberta, the constructive nurturer, is shown cooking and caring for Dez, i.e., trying to build a new home for the abandoned male, while Susan, the destructive consumer, is wrecking Gary's home, endlessly eating junk food and scattering leftovers and garbage around the house. The purpose of this comparative rendering of events is, of course, to once again reassert the margin as deviation from the center and to show its inhabitants as parasitic.

In order for the film to achieve moral credibility, it is equally critical of Gary's life. He is shown as superficial, insensitive and as living a spiritually empty life. The presentation of his emptiness is, however, done through so many cultural clichés (he is always runing to work, has little time for anything but business . . .) that it flatters the audience. It makes it possible for them to feel superior to Gary while at the same time adhering to the values of the center. This ideological maneuver leads the audience to the conclusion that Gary is living an empty life because he is at fault, not his values. The spiritual emptiness is presented as coming from personal problems, not from the center itself. And this emptiness can obtain anywhere: Gary's life is as empty as Susan's. Susan tries to escape from it; thus she is immature in thinking that there is a non-empty mode of living. But Gary submits to it because he, as a businessman, is immersed in the ethics of consumption and acquisition.

It is part of the ideology of the film to construct both Gary and Susan as sovereign selves: the moments of actualization of absolute free subjectivity. Gary is what he is because he wants to be that way, and similarly Susan is what she is because she has chosen so. The audience is never allowed to question this. In order for the film to make its ideological moves in the most non-ideological and covert fashion, it denounces not only Susan but also Gary. But the rejection of the two takes place for radically different reasons: Gary is an ineffectual member of the center while Susan is a dangerous part of the margin. The film then proceeds to reappropriate and renew the center by assimilating the margin's fringe which is least dangerous — Dez. Dez stands for those archetypal marginal figures who regenerate the center by being recruited in it. This re-integration of the margin's fringe takes place in the domain of love which is the guarantor of all family and state values.

At the end of the film, Roberta, now disentangled from the shadow of Susan, leaves Gary and moves in with Dez. This is a cue to the audience that the center is non-doctrinaire, liberating and always open to newness and otherness. But the otherness presented, namely Dez, is in fact sameness disguised as the other. Dez is a handsome family man, calm under pressure, self-confident, generous and loyal. He stands for patriarchy while Gary, who has the signs of the traditional aggressive, selfish male, turns out to be actually effeminate and ineffectual; he not only loses control under pressure, becoming emotional and eating like a woman to calm his nervousness, but he is also dominated by his sister Leslie who has to tell him what to do and guide him through the crisis. He is unable to take care of himself let alone a family; he cannot be trusted as the guardian of central values. By denouncing Gary, the film preserves the ideals of the center and in replacing him with Dez expands its range of domination. Dez is the sensitive new man: caring, vulnerable and egalitarian. whose friendship with Susan and Jim is more out of his sense of democratic pluralism (allowing different life-styles to co-exist) than a sense of belonging to a challenging cultural margin.

The differences between Roberta/Dez and Susan/Jim are made clear in the last scene of the film. This finale is significant because it almost has the force of the traditional moral of conventional narratives: it aims at reiterating and making clear to

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the audience that Roberta's desertion of Fort Lee and Gary should not be taken to mean that she identifies with Susan's values. The final scene depicts the two couples in entirely different spaces. Roberta/Dez are seen in action in the projection room with Dez running the film and Roberta approaching to kiss him. Susan/Jim, on the other hand, are sitting passively on the other side of the projection room consuming popcorn and the images projected on the screen. The parasiticism and hedonism that this last image projects on Susan is the concluding ideological move of the film through which the challenge of cultural values between the center and the margin are moralized as occurring between the forces of "good" and "evil" and therefore rendered, in the last analysis, transcendental and non-political. The margin is thus strategically framed and the hegemony of the center if reaffirmed. The two are thus kept apart and the political hierarchy founded on them is reassuringly preserved.

ADORNO'S *AESTHETIC THEORY*: THE TRANSLATION

by Bob Hullot-Kentor

Long awaited, Adorno's posthumous *Aesthetic Theory* is finally available in English.[1] It is the culmination of a lifetime of aesthetic investigation and the most important aesthetics of the century. However renowned the difficulty of Adorno's work, comparing the *Aesthetic Theory* with his earlier work, such as the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, is like juxtaposing New York City and seventeenth century Amsterdam. The peculiarity of its language is so intense that it is questionable what language it was written in. The translation has made enormous efforts to make the book understandable. Many passages have been crisply rendered; many lines that force the most devoted reader of the German to break off, sputtering to the surface for air, have been ingeniously and knowledgeably drawn into English. Someone died a thousand deaths translating this book. It is not a translation one wants to take a poke at. Still, a work that is in German almost unreadably fascinating has turned up in English, pithed. What happened?

Blunt errors have their share in its disorganization. Several will have to stand in for many: The central problem of the *Aesthetic Theory* is the possible liquidation of art; the fact that "today it goes without saying that nothing concerning art goes without saying" (p. 1e).[2] The aporia of art is that it is inherently affirmative while at the same time, given what the world has become, it can no longer put up with this affirmative element and tries to escape its own essence. Adorno explains this affirmative element as follows: "Art works detach themselves from the empirical world and out of its material produce a second world, seemingly real, that is opposed to the former. They therefore tend, *a*

1. *Aesthetic theory* (sic.), trans. C. Lenhardt (London: Routledge, 1984). The small case "t" on "theory" in the translation of the title is gratuitous and not maintained in this review.

2. Page numbers to the English and German are marked by (e) and (g) respectively. The German text is, *Aesthetische Theorie*, Gesammelte Schriften (G. S) 7 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1972).

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priori, however tragic their content, toward affirmation."[3] The translation goes out of its way to put Adorno in the wrong: "Works of art, it is said, leave the empirical world behind, producing a counter realm which is an existent like the empirical world. This claim is false; it implies an *a priori* affirmation" (p. 2e). The model of this second world is natural beauty, which Adorno describes as that in nature "which appears as containing something more (mehr) than what it literally is."[4] The translation of this line is crucial for it determines what it is that art must achieve, and hence the conditions of its failure. The translation, however, clouds the issue: "the beautiful in nature is that which appears greater when seen from a distance" (104e). Big is beautiful? Two final examples, somewhat more miscellaneous: According to Adorno, the content of art works is social: "Society, the determinant of experience, constitutes art works as their true subject." The artist does not *create* the work, but *constructs* it according to the requirements of the material. Adorno continues, "This is the counter argument to the challenge of subjectivism raised by both the left and right."[5] The translation, however, in keeping with a stubborn reference to artistic "creation" throughout the book (e.g. 140e, 160e), construes an attack on art as an attack on Adorno: The thesis of art's social content "is said in defense against the facile charge of subjectivism that has been raised against me both on the left and on the right (127e)." And, a final example: where Adorno writes that in the course of secularization the sacred is ultimately confined to secular forms, the translation has it that, ultimately, the sacred "is the only secular thing left" (p. 8e).[6]

Staying Home

It is not possible to replicate the degree to which these errors disorganize whole pages and sections of the book. A catalogue of errors, largely out of context, is a model of bad translation; the contextlessness of the list is a mirror of the context dissolved by jumbled translation. The frustration of trying to piece together a handful of examples corresponds to the helplessness felt as one scans the translation trying to figure out what went wrong. These errors, however, have a benign aspect: they can occasionally be recognized by their *contresens*, even if one is unable to refer back to the original and straighten them out. More important for the context of the book is what might be taken for trivial. The deletion of classical, French, and English terms foreign in the original is an example. Apparently minute, there is an important difference between the claim that the work of art is no pin up (as the translation has it), and that it is no "pin up" (the quotes marking it as English in the original). *Choris* and *methexis*, concepts that are key not only to Adorno's aesthetics, but to *Negative Dialectics*, and which establish the context of problems in the two works, as well as the tension between Adorno's thought and the entire philosophy of the idea from Plato through Benjamin, have been freely translated and left unmarked (cf. *chorismos* as "separatism," p. 8e). Fundamental to the condescending adaptation of the book to the inadequate education of its potential market (they will never learn, is the supposition), to the dissolution of the internal coherence of the work along with its historical resonance, is the effort to cloak the work's foreigness:

3. "Kunstwerke begeben sich hinaus aus der empirischen Welt und bringen eine dieser entgegengesetzte eigenen Wesens hervor, so als ob auch diese ein Seiendes waere. Damit tendieren sie a priori, moegen sie noch so tragisch sich auffuehren, zur Affirmation (p. 10g)."

4. "Schoen ist an der Natur, was als mehr erscheint, denn was es buchstaeblich an Ort und Stelle ist" (p. 111g).

5. "Gesellschaft, die Determinante der Erfarung, konstituiert die Werke als deren wahres Subjekt; das ist dem rechts und links kurrenten Vorwurf des Subjektivismus entgegenzuhalten (p. 133g)."

6. "Unverkennbar die Analogie zur Tendenz der Profanitaet, den sakralen Bereich zu saekularisieren, bis dieser allein noch saekularisiert sich enthaelt (p. 16g)."

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"pin up" as pin up is the naturalization of a form, no longer seen from the other side of the Atlantic. Adorno gave the greatest possible importance to the use of foreign terms;[7] they are in a sense the ideal of his syntax. If, as Adorno claims, modern art must make things of which we cannnot say what they are,[8] aesthetics that is to more than report on the matter must itself be insistently foreign, though not by copying art, but by making itself adequate to it. The language of the *Aesthetic Theory* is abstract not in the sense of being "intellectual," but in the sense in which modern art is called abstract. The intention of this translation, in contrast, is the narrowing of distance. Where Adorno compares Tuscany with the industrial region of Gelsenkirchen, the translation — rather than putting in a note to an unfamiliar region — compares it with Pittsburgh and Birmingham, to cover its English language market (p. 112g./106e).

Apologetics

The critique of the coercion of discursive thought required the elimination of causal, buffering and subordinating transitions; in the paratactical form of the *Aesthetic Theory*, every sentence must lie equally near the center; each sentence must strive to gain its relation to the rest of the work less by subordination than by the force of its self-containment. Thus the inevitable affinity for belligerence of a form that means to give in to the object. Indifferent to the formal concerns of the work, however, the translation aims at smoothing down the bristles. Where Adorno claims that a certain historical cliché is "incontestable," the translation interpolates that "there is some truth" in it (p. 6e).[9] Academic circumspection cancels the vulnerability of the purely asserted. Where Adorno claims that art's dialectic "is similar to the social dialectics without imitating it," the translation hedges, prefacing the clause with, "to put it more cautiously" (p. 7e).[10] Where Adorno writes that art works are windowless monads, the translation returns that they are "like" windowless monads.[11] Where Adorno writes that art works do not copy nature but natural beauty and hence do not replicate clouds but recreate the experience of struggles seen in them, the translation responds that art "seem (s) to enact cloud dramas" (p. 105e).[12] Where Adorno has it that the Hegelian idea is theodically restricted to the form of its realization, the translation responds that, for Hegel, "the Idea cannot be viewed otherwise than as self-actualizing" (p. 110e).[13] Here the social content of the translation becomes apparent in the form of an epistemological *parti pris*. Following the commodity's lead of simulating the desired object, the current preference for reading things "as" this and that, assuming universal fungability, exchanges the possibility of experience for a covert and simulated subjective constitutionality, to date an unexamined lure of the commodity form.

"Just A Second"

The translator wants to provide an Adorno that would act as tour guide to aesthetics; a long trip is planned, with occasional detours, clearly marked. Our interest and safety

7. Adorno, "Woerter aus der Fremde," in *Noten zur Literature*, G.S. 11, pp. 216-232.
8. (p. 178g)
9. "Trotzdem ist die geistesgeschichtliche Trivialität unbestreitbar. . .(p. 15g)."
10. Art's "Dialektik [aehnelt] die auswendige [Dialektik] (p. 15g)."
11. "Dass die Kunstwerke als fensterlose Monaden das 'vorstellen', was sie nicht selbst sind . . . (p. 15g)." This *als* means neither "like" nor "as" in any metamorphical sense. The French translation renders the clause as: "Le fait que les oeuvres d'art, monades sans fenetres, "represent" ce qu'elles ne sont pas elles-memes . . ." *Theorie Esthetique*, traduit de l'allemand par Marc Jimenez (Paris: Klinsieck, 1974) p. 15.
12. "Bildet Kunst nicht die Wolken ab, so versuchen die Dramen dafuer, die der Wolken aufzufuehren (p. 111g)."
13. "weil die Idee nicht anders soll sein koennen als wie sie sich realisiert (p. 116g)."

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would be first in his mind: "as we saw" (p. 3e), "art, we said" (p. 3e), "we can see" (p. 129e); a guide concerned with our forgetfulness: "as we saw," and often pedantically so: "let us remember" (p. 4e); anxious to hold our attention with rhetorical questions (p. 31e); who hangs out of the van for interesting asides "incidentally" (p. 31e), "turning for a moment" (p. 30e), "in passing"; and provides smart summaries: "in short" (p. 30e). These phrases are as implausible in Adorno's work as Mondrian stapling the photo of a niece onto a canvas. The function of the interpolated time markers is the reverse of what they say: phrases such as "turning for a moment" are used to absorb the fragmentary elements of the text; their claim is that the instant is derivative and subordinate to the eternal theses of the work; marked as derivative, the expressive content of the fragments vanishes while the rest of the work hardens around them. Casting a net of thesis and marginalia over the work, it is no surprise that the translation designates many sections as "examples" (p. 77e). Yet there are no more examples in Adorno's work than a dream interpretation in the course of psychoanalysis is an example of the analysis. The *Aesthetic Theory* is not the representation of a train of thought that can be followed longitudinally. The book is literally not there; it can only be thought through the imagination: as Adorno said of Hegel's work, it can only be read associatively. The external continuity that is forced on the work by the translation does not make the book whole; it blows it to bits. Memorable themes are left behind, sure to be endlessly quoted while their content has been eviscerated.[14] Like the various other ways in which the commodity simulates nearness, with all the gadgetry of personalization, the result is depersonalization; the experiential content of the work is destroyed by canceling its distance, which is ultimately the intensity of its internal process. If the translation were an introduction to modern art it would want to make sense of abstract painting by connecting the lines. It in fact numbered the titled sub-sections, a mythological device referring back to a *prius* whose suppression was Adorno's fundamental concern in the writing of the book.[15] The translation documents the mythical content that has been superimposed on the work: since the sections are not in any sense monodirectionally sequential, following the numbers only insures getting lost.

Indentation

The transitional and subordinating phrases noted so far are the internal mechanism of the major formal transformation carried out by the translation. Rather than the dense constellative blocks of the original, the translation has broken the work up into paragraphs. To the nominalist indiffence to form, this seems to be a harmless visual convenience. The ease, however, refers to having lost the matter at hand. The moment of clarity in the brief indentation, as if one were finally being given the thesis of the section, is paid for by an impossible murkiness that fills up in the depth of the paragraph as one attempts to follow an homogeneous substance from thesis to conclusion. The French translation also carved up the book into paragraphs, and it is more than a curiosity that the two versions hardly ever agree on the correct spot to throw in a wrench. At points the paragraphs appear to have been simply measured out; at others, the anxiety to find points to slice up the constellation produced a sensitivity for the exploitation of precisely those moments where enjambment — in the original — becomes cognitive. The paragraphs play havoc with the book. They give it a disembodied sense, as if it were dubbed rather than translated; one senses that the language has separated from the movement of thought.

14. Cf. Adorno, "On the Fetish Character in Music and the Regression in Listening," in the *Essential Frankfurt School Reader* (N.Y.: Urizen, 1978) pp. 270-299.

15. Cf. pp. 493-498e.

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The critique of the paragraph is of a part with that of discursive thought's subordinating monodirectionality; whereas the constellation must be read as much from the bottom up, as from the top down, in the translation subjective reason has installed paragraphs to mark the work as a one-way street; the indented line is a point of no return. The translations's justification of the paragraph is its *modus operandi*: the transformation of *thésis* into nature. This nature, however, is the second nature of the discursive form, i.e. of self-preservation. Adorno's work, on the contrary, sides with nature through distance from it. A new nature, a new spontaneity, is intended through the completion of *thésis*. This thought converges with the ancient idea of *ars ut artem falleret*, which constantly reoccurs in Adorno's work in the ever repeated idea of the healing sword. Adorno's work is not a return to the unparagraphed diffuseness of the emblem books, or of the sacred manuscript. If the paragraph is the mark of subjective reason's demand that language exist only for it, Adorno finds the dialectical solution: the only way out of false *thésis* is through. In the *Aesthetic Theory* every word has, so to speak, been indented. Although popular opinion has it that Adorno was not a Marxist, his work is a critique of the relations of production: of technique that is organized as the domination of nature. The freeing of forces of production, ultimately of subjectivity (p. 62g/62e), would be their direction towards helping nature "wohin sie moechte."[16] The achievement of Adorno's *Aesthetic Theory* is the degree to which the world does not have to be what it is; the translation is the counter-evidence. The *Aesthetic Theory* is a technical achievement that has been archaically repossessed in translation, namely by the various ways in which the work has been reduced to the order of self-preservation. The irony is of course that conquering the book, narrowing the distance for the good of its readers, puts it permanently beyond them. This is the metaphysical content of the translation, as of any commodity: it goes beyond experience by wiping out its possibility.

16. p. 107g.

REPLY TO HULLOT-KENTOR

by Christian Lenhardt

It is rare for a translation to be reviewed as a translation in a theoretical journal. It is even rarer, perhaps unprecedented, for a translator to reply to his reviewer. But Hullot-Kentor is only the immediate cause of my going public. The deeper and more remote cause will become clear shortly. Before doing so, however, I want to comment on what I regard as two serious omissions in Hullot-Kentor's criticism.

Words From Foreign Lands

While Hullot-Kentor seems to know Adorno's German intimately, he may not be as familiar with modern German in general, or else he would not have chastized me for failing to put quotation marks around pin-ups so as to identify it as an English phrase

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in the original. For one thing, quotation marks would hardly suffice to indicate this unambiguously; rather an explanatory footnote ("English in the original") would be necessary. For another, words like pin-up, centerfold, jazz, software, feedback, computer, etc. attest to the dreadfully unerotic imperialism of American English after WW II — a time when bastards such as *franglais* and its many siblings were fathered. The German language has not proved itself any more resilient than French in this respect. The afore-mentioned words, and scores of others, have no German equivalents or, if they do, the language-in-use largely ignores them. Anyway, it is not a translator's job to identify each and every Americanism that has been naturalized around the world.[1]

Hullot-Kentor also decries my tendency to dump Greek words "which establish the context of problems . . . and the tension between Adorno's thought and the history of philosophy from Plato to Benjamin." He refers to two examples, *methexis* and *chorismos*.

Before diagnosing a case of condescension, Hullot-Kentor should have done more homework. *Methexis* is left in Greek at least as often as it is translated. That leaves *chorismos*. He is correct: I have not taken it into the translation. Why? Unlike *nous*, *psyche*, *ousia* and countless other terms, *chorismos* played no systematic role in ancient philosophy whatsoever. My conservative guess is that Adorno used *chorismos* about two dozen times in his writings — which is exactly two dozen times more than Plato. The only incidence of the term in Plato's work comes in *Phaedo* 67d where Socrates asks: "Is not what we call death a . . . *chorismos* of soul from body?" The same goes for the Aristotelian corps where *chorismos* crops up once, namely in *Nicomachean Ethics* 1175a. If one were to explain why the word *chorismos* held such a fascination for Adorno, the reason surely *cannot* be that it had a clearly defined, technical connotation in classical philosophy. Nor does it have such a connotation for Adorno himself. Accordingly, I decided that I was dealing with a linguistic mannerism of sorts which had no autonomous relevance and detracted unnecessarily from reading the text. Hullot-Kentor would in all seriousness dispatch readers to a Greek-English dictionary just to find out what Adorno's quirks mean.

The issue might as well be faced squarely: Adorno learned Greek in high school, but his knowledge of it was too elementary to enable him to read classical philosophy in the original. That he occasionally feigns a deeper familiarity with these matters, is unfortunate, perhaps a trace *hochstadelnd* and unbecoming. By eliminating *chorismos* and a few other Greek terms (*thesei*, *physei*) I eliminated the false impression that Adorno was steeped heavily in the language and philosophy of the Greeks.

Condescension towards readers who "will never understand"? Certainly not. If I am guilty, it is of trying to sweep an embarrassment mercifully under the rug. By his criticism, Hullot-Kentor forces me to sweep the embarrassment right back into public view, when a conspiracy of silence would have served us (and Adorno) better.

As far as strictly everyday, nontechnical terms from Greek and Latin are concerned, I was no less self-conscious about how I handled them. It is common knowledge that they are not equally familiar in different languages. The realization that Italians, irrespective of whether they have learned Latin or not, know what it means to say that something is being put off *ad calendas graecas*, whereas Anglo-Americans do not, should be reason enough for a translator from the Italian to render the phrase as 'indefinitely.' Similarly, the Greek term *kat exochen* is popularly known in German but unknown

1. The slang term 'phony' might be a different story. It does not belong to the above group. Adorno uses it in one or two places. Perhaps this and a few other instances should have been marked.

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elsewhere; by translating it as *par excellence*, I gave it the appearance of something that is foreign yet not incomprehensible. True enough, translations are futile struggles to patriate what is foreign. But why give up over an essentially trivial aspect of language use like Latin and Greek phrases? Any translator from the German who consistently keeps *eo ipso* and *post festum* in his English text signals that he has lamely thrown in the towel, for he capitulates for the wrong reasons. If one is really attuned to the culture-specific incidence of Latin terms in everyday German and English, one knows that *eo ipso* and *post festum* are frequently used and well understood in German, whereas English speakers cannot make heads or tails of them. Try *ipso facto* (for *eo ipso*) and *ex post facto* (for *post festum*) and, other things being equal, you will begin to make sense. I fundamentally disagree with the reviewer that foreign terms ought to be kept the way they are in order to underscore the foreignness of *Aesthetic Theory* when the latter's exotic, utterly un-English character already leaps from every page and every sentence. Foreign terms, except for technical ones and quotations, can and should be patriated, in any translation, along the lines I have suggested.

Hullot-Kentor refers to Adorno's essay "Wörter aus der Fremde" (in *Noten zur Literatur II*) to justify his position. This justification is unfounded. The piece "Words From Foreign Lands" is an analysis of a phenomenon of cultural lag which is peculiar to Germany, namely the inchoate Latinization of its language and culture. Adorno's lament goes something like this. As long as Germans eschew *Fremdwörter* — 'universal' words derived from Greek and Latin — they will be trapped in their self-incurred immaturity and crude parochialism. In English and the Romance languages this is *not* a problem because here the autochthonous tribal tongues were fused with Latin and Greek words at least (I am guessing) 300-400 years ago. On this issue, as on many others, Adorno was a kind of old-fashioned pro-Enlightenment thinker who lamented the fact that Germany was so backward. Consequently, his principle of word choice was to prefer *Fremdwörter* over indigenous German words. He would for example say *Spontaneität* rather than *Unwillkürlichkeit*. Clearly, no translator can possibly go wrong here, even if he tried to, since for every two words in German he has only one (e.g., spontaneity) and it would be the one whose German equivalent Adorno preferred. Not only does Hullot-Kentor misinterpret "Words From Foreign Lands," which concerns *Fremdwörter* and says nothing about foreign phrases and whether or not they should be used (*Fremdwörter* and foreign phrases are not the same). But he also misrepresents the implications the essay has for problems of translation: it has none whatsoever.[2]

What is the point here? It is that I do take a highly calculated approach to the question of foreign terms — an approach which may not be obvious on first reading. Hullot-Kentor, for his part, should have gone beyond first impressions of jumbledness and chaos. If he had dug a little deeper into the matter, he would have discovered, not a lack of premediation, but a great deal, possibly a surfeit of it. Since he justifies his method of contextless citation of errors by saying that it mirrors the amorphousness of the translation, I have tried in this section to document (through a case study) the fact that there is design and forethought where the reviewer sees none. It follows that his whole method of inventorying errors out of context is devoid of justification, es-

2. Incidentally, this essay also contains some extraordinarily charming autobiographical asides about an aunt who would torment her French tutor by looking up outlandish words in the dictionary trying to trip him up. Or the confession that Adorno and his 'friend Erich' were irrationally and passionately attracted to *Fremdwörter* as if they were 'exotic girls.' All that by way of giving a tongue-in-cheek account of why he, Adorno, might have become something of a *Fremdwörter* freak.

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pecially in the section entitled "Just a Second." Of course I writhe when I read my platitudes, fastidiously strung together, one after another. If Hullet-Kentor had made an honest statistical effort, he might have a case that the translation as a whole is inadequate. Failing that, the inanities remain rare enough to be inconspicuous in the overall scheme.[3]

Stylistic lapses aside, there is only one technical word to which Hullot-Kentor objects: creation. By using it too often I am supposed to have violated Adorno's strictures against the personalistic glorification of the artist as a creative subject. Fiddlesticks. More often than not I use creation in reference to an object as in 'artistic creations' (*künstlerische Gebilde*), sometimes in reference to process (creation as *Hervorbringung*), he keeps it a secret. I know none in a context where "production" is preempted by *Produktion* and *Herstellung*. In any event, Adorno's thesis that the bringing into existence of an art work is not some demiurgic and spontaneous *creatio ex nihilo* is so often repeated that it cannot be lost on the reader, even if the reference to this process as a process of creation were a blatant mistranslation — which it is not.

Omissions

I am more than a little disgruntled at seeing *Aesthetic Theory* treated as though it were the first and only translation of Adorno into English. The timid reviewer passes the universe of existing Adorno translations over in nepotistic silence. I much prefer Martin Jay's candor who states for the record that "many" of them vie for the distinction of being the worst. ("Adorno in Amerika," in *Adorno-Konferenz 1983*, p. 365). Jay is not a translator, which is why he can afford to be so blunt. Hullot-Kentor knows but does not say what Jay says: that the Orcus to which he consigns *Aesthetic Theory* is full of other warm bodies. Life at the bottom is far from lonely.

It would be in bad taste for me to compare *Aesthetic Theory* to the universe to which it belongs. In an unguarded moment Hullot-Kentor forgot his strictly idiographic principle of criticism, contrasting the French translation of *Aesthetic Theory* by Jimenez and Kaufholz favorably to mine. Yet, the French translation as a whole is an excessively literal, gutless translation in which not a single word is interpolated for greater readability. Here are some examples where literalness produces unadulterated gobbledigook.

In VII/9 Adorno talks about the link between enigma and fragment:

"[Rätsel] sind sie [die Kunstwerke], weil sie als Abgebrochene dementieren, was sie doch sein wollen." (p. 191g)

"[Les oeuvres d'art] sont énigmes, car, en tant que séparées, elles démentent ce que, pourtant, elles voudraient être." (Vol. 1, p. 172f)

"[Works of art] are riddles precisely because they are fragments disclaiming to be wholes, even though wholes is what they really want to be." (p. 184e)

Jimenez fails to see that by a simple interpolation (". . . voudraient être: intégrales") he could have come up with something that makes sense. The fact that he misrepresents "Abgebrochenes" might be merely incidental, were it not for the narrow literalist goal he has set himself. Finally, "sont énigmes" is ungrammatical and needs an indefinite article. In the next sentence (not quoted here in full), Jimenez misses the

3. Despite his meticulousness, nowhere does Hullot-Kentor admit that the German original was rushed into print and is woefully underedited. I have also quietly, without annotations, corrected obvious nonsense on many occasions (e.g., Adorno's half-English idiom "preaching to the saved" in XII/12).

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boat with "colonne die vie" (for *Lebenssäule*), which in French means about as little as "life column" in English. *L'obélisque* or *la stéle* would have meant something. The following section (p. 173f) begins with the tortured expression "dans l'instance suprême" (for *in oberster Instanz*) when the correct French phrase is "en dernière analyse."

Do I have to go on? When a translation goes so far in its literalism as to ape the article conventions of the original and to render innocent nontechnical idioms verbatim it stops being a translation. Poor Jimenez. Why did Hullot-Kentor have to drag him into this?

Hullot-Kentor's other important omission is not to wonder aloud why there is no translator's introduction. Why would anyone "die a thousand deaths" (Hullot-Kentor's words) and not care to talk about it? Why would a translator of a fatally cryptic work like *Aesthetic Theory* not seize the chance to make apologies for what he has done and failed to do?

Why indeed? I had assumed that such apologies were in order and that I would be able to air them in a preface to the book. The truth of the matter is that the English publisher deleted my introduction at the insistence of Adorno's literary estate. Had I known this beforehand, I would not have agreed to do the translation at all. No translator in his right, responsible mind should be forced to work like a *deus ex machina*, noiselessly and behind the scene. His silence will invariably be mistaken for a claim to infallibility.

The vagaries of the translation project were endless and cannot be retold in detail here. Two or three years were wasted over the acquisition of the English rights alone because the German copyright holder insisted on royalties being paid in American dollars whereas Routledge wanted to pay in British pounds. Here, as in other matters, notably the translator's preface, Routledge eventally caved in. Such haggling resulted in delays totalling 4 or 5 years. Had *Aesthetic Theory* come out in 1980, its publication would have been timelier, for it would have preceded P. Bürger, H.R. Jauss and others in the Minnesota Series. Given the reverse chronology of publication, these authors are bound to be misunderstood and their impact might be greater than it should be. Americans simply will not have had enough time to realize just how unceremoniously they "carve up the loot," which is Adorno's aesthetics, making off with discrete chunks as they please (Wellmer). In short, I cannot help feeling that *Aesthetic Theory* comes on the scene too late, confirming the criticism that it was obsolete to begin with because its concept of modern art is too closely wedded to artistic tendencies which came to an end with the first half of this century, if not earlier (Dalhous, Bürger, Jauss, et al.).

I agree the layout makes no sense as a whole, in view of the postface's contention that the book has no chapters when it patently does. On completion of the type-setting, Routledge was informed that they were contractually obligated not to change the layout at all. At this point, Suhrkamp and the Adorno estate were playing hardball inasmuch as they wanted every chapter and section heading and the entire paragraphing removed, along with the translator's introduction. They also insisted on inserting the German postface which I had intended to leave out. The final product is a bad, infuriating compromise. Routledge was permitted to keep the paragraphing, chaptering and sectioning, if the other conditions were met. The legal situation being what it was, I should have argued more strongly in favor of giving in completely to Suhrkamp's demands, no matter how expensive this might have turned out to be for the English publisher. But at that crucial point my emotional resources had been spent and I was totally unable to care.

Returning to apologies, I had the reassuring confidence throughout that I under-

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stood what Adorno meant, except in some of the woollier paralipomena, like A-55, an analysis of Beethoven's strong quartet op. 59, no. 1, and the piece on *Pelléas et Mélisande* (A-124). I had the least confidence in the prolixity of the translation and I wanted the reader to know that. It seemed to me I was writing three words where the original had one. In fact I was afraid the translation would run to 800 pages or more, and I was pleasantly surprised when it did not. Because of the larger print the German edition is actually longer — 574 pages — than the English. Even so, prolixity is a problem. Adorno's German is a model of *Prägnanz* (economy of words). In retrospect I realize I could have tried harder to imitate it, or at least achieve a better balance between it and the wordiness which is a constitutive aspect of the English language. In my judgment, English is a veritable chatterbox of a language. Anyway, what I would have wanted to warn readers about is that what they have before them is not the real McCoy and if they are seriously interested in Adorno they had better start learning German. Not only did Adorno hold that presentation (*Darstellung*) is as important as the content presented. But he was also convinced, on the basis of his experience in England and America, that English is a poor vehicle for his philosophy. This thought goes some way toward exculpating translators who feel apologetic about what they have done, and that includes me.

REDEEMING REDEMPTION

by Paul Breines

The nice thing about *Telos* 63 is that, as with most of its sixty-two predecessors, paradox and tension are not altogether foreign to it. So while the main drift of the contributions dealing directly with the journal's political reorientation is unfortunate, it is not the only drift there is. The remarkable lead article by Paggi and Pinzauti, for example, runs in many respects against *Telos*' recent grain. Its "non-political" and pacifist reinterpretation of the issue of peace and security manages, among other achievements, to restore to these pages at least momentarily a politics of redemption, while Feher's "Redemptive and Democratic Paradigms in Radical Politics" and Whitebook's "Politics of Redemption" are aimed at purging from radicalism all redemptive residues. Wolin's note on the "Bankruptcy of Left-wing *Kulturkritik*" and Siegel's review of recent books on liberalism generally fit the political impulses of Feher's and Whitebook's contributions (though Wolin seems less ready than they are to forsake vistas derived from Bloch and the Frankfurt School). *Telos* 63, then, confirms the discontent with which some of us have greeted the journal's new directions, but it also provides some grounds for thinking that the picture is not entirely bleak.

Feher's and Whitebook's essays, while different in notable ways, nonetheless share a number of common features. Both are presented as serious statements of disenchantment with previously (and passionately) held political and social-theoretical positions. As documents in this sense, they have about them a definite truth and, moreover, a cer-

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tain dramatic quality, depicting as they do their authors' journeys to a new wisdom after having passed through a serious relationship with a lover now seen as deeply flawed — redemptive leftist politics. If both essays are inspired by disenchantment and draw strength and insight from this peculiarly dynamic source, they are also its victims. For both authors are too quick to rationalize their separation from the old love and too averse to reconstructing the whole story of the romance, above all explaining what drew them in the first place to the politics they now reject.

Within the frame of disenchantment, Feher and Whitebook also share the common goal of expunging redemptive themes from radical politics. Both warn against creating a new demonology, but it is not clear that either is successful in avoiding this. Feher and Whitebook also seek a similar alternative: the former's democratic paradigm, the latter's politics of maturity (*Mündigkeit*). They characterize the bad, redemptive side in similar terms, centering around the redeemers' reductive approach to what Feher calls the inherent complexity of modernity, and the totalitarian politics that supposedly flow from this. Feher's glittering essay highlights the links between the redemptive paradigm as social theory and the political figure of the (individual) redeemer, with Napoleon and his interpretation by Hegel being the prototype of later incarnations; the figure of the redeemer in this sense does not really enter Whitebook's discussion. Both essays, meanwhile, have common positive and negative reference points, which indicate *Telos*' new itinerary: Arendt, Habermas, Castoriadis, Feher and Heller among the former; Lukács, the Frankfurt School and the 1960s new left among the latter.

The two essays share some problem spots as well. Brief and polemical as the essays are, it is neither surprising nor entirely objectionable that their sketches of redemptive politics are, as Whitebook says of his own, stylized and abstract. The first problem, though, is that the sketches are also one-sided, reductive and inclined to treat the redemptive paradigm rather as they claim the redemptionists treat modernity. The redemptive paradigm's "inherent complexity" (Feher's phrase regarding modernity) tends to be ignored, while the distance between the democratic and redemptive paradigms is stretched tendentiously. Feher, for example, indicates quite rightly that the redemptive paradigm has both left-wing (preeminently Lukács) and right-wing (from Nazism to Reganism) expressions. But this is not sufficient differentiation. Within the left-wing variant of redemptive politics, there is a democratic and undemocratic current, but the former appears nowhere in Feher's and Whitebook's account. Among other examples of what for this debate we can call democratic redemptionists are Félicité de Lamennais and Georg Büchner (of the "Hessian Messenger") in the 19th century, and Gustav Landauer, the Civil Rights movement and even Solidarity in the 20th. To put the issue bluntly: if Feher and Whitebook are going to be convincing about their claims to have moved from a reductionist and dogmatic paradigm to a more mature and pluralistic one, then they will need to find a less reductionist and more pluralistic path to this desireable place.

A second and closely related sore spot in both essays is their shared assumption that the redemptive paradigm in social theory (its leftist variants) is *necessarily* linked to totalitarian-redemptive politics. If this fairly large assumption is to stick, it needs more substantiation than either author provides. Take the case of Sartre, who figures prominently in both essays; the Sartre who discovered a redeemer in Fanon's violent wretched of the earth and then in the Khmer Rouge. Let's agree that these were lamentable political choices. Two questions then arise. First, was Sartre, the social theorist, really part of the redemptive paradigm? Leave aside the point that, from *Being and Nothingness* through *The Family Idiot*, Sartre was a philosopher of the "person *qua* per-

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son," one of the values Whitebook seees as central to the politics of *Mündigkeit* and at odds with the politics of redemption. More important for now is the point that Sartre's *Critique of Dialectical Reason* does not project a paradigm of redemption but one of an eternally recurrent *conflict* between the "group" and its "serialization" in the "practico-inert." In his view of Third World revolutions, Sartre, the politicized intellectual, may have exemplified what Feher sees as a decisive and inescapable feature of the redemptive paradigm: its endorsement of the revolutionary homogenization of society by an all-powerful redeemer state or party. But a coherent case can surely be made that the material in *Critique of Dialectical Reason* is a) not in any simple sense the key source of Sartre's political decision, and b) that the *Critique* more clearly provides a source of *criticism* of its author's political decisions.

Lukács also looms large in both essays and Lukács, the social theorist, is, in contrast to Sartre, emphatically a substantial figure in the redemptive paradigm. His choices in relation to Lenin and Stalin need no rehearsing here. But neither Feher, who is the most distinguished contemporary analyst of Lukács, nor Whitebook, is very convincing that Lukács' political options in the 1920s flow inescapably from his theoretical writings of that period. *History and Class Consciousness*, including its notorious discussions of imputed class consciousness and revolutionary organization, for example, yields Bolshevik *but also anti-Bolshevik* politics. We agree: Lukács made bad political choices, but his writings of the early 1920s contain the ingredients of a critique of those choices. As Arato and others have indicated in their studies of Lukács, the Hungarian philosopher defined the imputed class consciousness concept as an ideal type in the definite Weberian sense; that is, as a category of reason á la Kant, and thus *not* one that can be connected to empirical or phenomenal material such as a specific revolutionary party. Of course, Lukács made such a connection, thus attributing to the Soviet party not merely political but metaphysical, even religious sanctity. But he did so *against* the terms of his own theory, not just because of those terms. In this sense, the concept of imputed class consciousness is a critique of the Soviet or any other vanguard party. Similarly, Lukács' unparalleled, nearly theological defense of purges in his essay on organization in *History and Class Consciousness* got linked to the whole macabre purge process through which the Communist movement dragged itself. And Lukács' essay certainly lent (and lends) itself to such linkage. But you do not have to be a fan of that essay to see clearly in it also a sharp critique of the actual purges as they emerged in the Communist International in 1923 and after.

The need for a more differentiated and pluralistic approach to the redemptive paradigm is visible in other cases — some cited, others not — in Feher's and Whitebook's essays. Consider the German writer and revolutionary, Gustav Landauer, who does not appear in their accounts. Landauer's rejection of modernity in the name of a neo-romantic anti-capitalism was more total even than Lukács' (Landauer viewed Marxism itself as the worst of modernity); he was a mystic, an anti-rationalist and perhaps the purest representative of the redemption paradigm in social theory. Yet Landauer was also an anti-statist, communitarian anarchist and a fervent supporter of democracy. When it comes to upholding the rights of the "person *qua* person" against the claims of the capitalist, revolutionary or any other homogenizing state, Feher and Whitebook will find a kindred spirit in Landauer, that died-in-the-wool redemptionist.

Or take the opposite case of Trotsky, the major redeemer figure in Feher's essay. Trotsky fits into some of Feher's criteria of the redemptive paradigm, but no matter how far you stretch some of the other criteria, they will not encompass the chief

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theorist of rapid industrialization. Trotsky, in other words, was an ultra-modernist and an ultra-modernizer who had no patience for the romantic anti-capitalism of the Lukács or the Landauer type, but a soft spot for the homogenizing state.

Trotsky's case suggests a large dimension of the whole issue, one that is left out of Feher's and Whitebook's discussions: namely, the relation between *modernity* and the homogenizing or totalitarian state. For starters in this connection, Feher and Whitebook are too selective in their suggestions as to who among the "free-floating intelligentsia" supported left-wing totalitarianism (Stalinism) in this century. Feher has some fascinating and forceful things to say about the pathologies to which free-floating intellectuals are prone, but he seems reluctant to spread his net as far as it ought to be spread. That is, he (and Whitebook) limits it to the neo-romantic anti-capitalist redemptionists, when in fact they had no monopoly of the Stalinist chorus. On the contrary, if you survey the large picture from, say, the 1920s though the 1950s, you are likely to find that the great number of intellectuals who endorsed Stalinism and saw the Soviet Union as a redeemer society were not anti-modernist or counter-Enlightenment in their outlooks, but precisely ultra-modernists and ultra-modernizers.

Feher is right, as Koestler, Gide and others were some decades ago, in suggesting that many intellectuals between the world wars turned to Stalin's Russia as a kind of replacement for a lost (or, as Feher suggests, incompletely lost) religion. But David Caute's account of *The Fellow Travellers* views them primarily as heirs of the Enlightenment. Most Western intellectuals were drawn to the Soviet Union in the 1930s because, against a backdrop of Depression and Fascism, they saw in it a beacon of modernity, technological progress, economic stability, productivity, the social triumph of science and scientists, efficiency, a lively cultural life and "the most democratic in the world." It is of some note in this context that the great dystopian novelists of the period, Zamyatin, Huxley and Orwell, located the cultural roots of the totalitarian state not in anti-modernist, counter-Enlightenment ideas, but in modernist, scientific ones.

Regarding the reductive and generally one-sided aspects of the Feher and Whitebook essays, consider also the case of Adorno, who is often taken as the exemplar of the Frankfurt School's alleged scorn for formal democracy. Given Adorno's total rejection of the Enlightenment and the modern world, so the argument runs, his thought had no room for such achievements of modernity as formal democracy and pluralism. But again, such an argument — not made in either essay, but often raised in *Telos* discussions — makes a too simple jump from the theory to its apparent political outcome. To make a longer story short, Adorno, far from being a supporter of any sort of totalitarian politics, was not only a defender of formal democracy, but was the godfather of an important segment of *Telos*' new politics, having formulated over thirty years ago what today could serve as the journal's epigraph: "You can't fight the Communists with toothpicks," said the author of *Negative Dialectic* when refusing to sign a disarmament petition circulated by peaceniks in the early 1950s. It goes more or less without saying that all of Adorno's writings offer a sound basis for criticism of this political position.

Feher's and Whitebook's impulse to pass over the modernist and modernizing redeemers seems connected to the fact that one finds few if any signs in these essays of a critique of modernity and capitalism; few signs of any discontent with them. In fairness, this is not what the authors are writing about. But it is notable nonetheless that in these essays modernity and capitalism appear not merely in their strictly political expressions, but in only one of those expressions, the bourgeois-democratic tradition. There appears to be a kind of multiple amnesia here, which Whitebook himself glimpses in a remarkable passage. "To be sure," he writes, "we must not forget the

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critique of capitalism and must consistently remind ourselves that these principles [underlying and bourgeois-democratic tradition] have a largely counterfactual status, which means they are not fully realized or are in fact regularly violated in practice. Nevertheless, for the first time in history, they are recognized as valid principles and even the system is forced to appeal to them to carry out is dirty work." "To be sure," indeed. What does seem sure is that if you reject, as Feher insists near the end of his essay, "all versions of the redemptive paradigm," then you *are* likely to forget the critique of capitalism. Having long ago and properly rejected the historical progressivism and triumphalism of Marxism, Whitebook, Feher and others now may be resurrecting, with apparently new trimmings, its old bourgeois counter-part.

The amnesia, as noted, is multiple. Whitebook, for example, notes that his politics of *Mündigkeit* is grounded in "principles connected with the recognition of the person *qua* person which were recognized with the bourgeois-democratic revolutions and which must not be abrogated but defended and elaborated in any acceptable radical politics. This is a non-negotiable demand, as we used to say undemocratically in the 1960s." Recognition of the person as person has a great deal to do with radical politics, but the rest of this passage probably does not. Where, for example, does one find in the "bourgeois-democratic" revolutions real advocacy of the person as person — among the Levellers or the Independents? The National Assembly or the Sans Cullottes? The Declaration of Independence? It is at least as sensible to note that none of the *bourgeois* revolutions sought democracy, while the great examples of democratic revolutionary initiatives are not bourgeois in any meaningful sense. As Arendt shows in the last part of *On Revolution*, struggles for democracy have rarely been monopolized by any one class. Nor is it clear why a procedure that was supposedly undemocratic in the 1960s — making non-negotiable demands — should be democratic in 1985. And is this what the '60s has come do mean to some of us now? Have we really forgotten that recognition of the person as person and the imperative of democracy were the very lifeblood of the Civil Rights movement, S.D.S. and much of the politics of redemption of that time? What does *Telos* really have to learn today?

It is time for a long sentence. As Feher and Whitebook suggest, it is true, if not really news in these pages, that the neo-romantic anti-capitalism characteristic of the 1960s new left combined with an elitism that was always at odds with the movement's democratic impulses in the context of the U.S. government's increasingly barbaric war in South East Asia to propel many but by no means all in its ranks toward a crazy Third Worldism on which the movement choked nearly to death. But crazy Third Worldism was neither typical of the new left as a whole nor of such of its theoretical expressions as this journal. *Telos*, with its Pacian, Lukácsian and Frankfurtian inspirations was always hermetic — delighting in its incomprehensibility to the surrounding social movement — but never vanguardist. It consistenty rejected Bolshevism, including Lukács' version. The journal's pages presented anti-authoritarian and often neo-romantic anti-capitalist redemptionist ideas, in this way contributing something to the new left. Not unlike the movement to which it was tied, *Telos* was simultaneously redemptionist and pessimistic, even melancholy. Tough talk, sophomoric bombast and old-time leftist indictiveness peppered its pages, but the journal had no interest in power, no orientation toward it. As an organ of social theory, *Telos* was the new left's *schelmiel*, its Good Soldier Schweik, its Yossarian.

It no longer is. A new spirit has come to the fore. Rhetorically, this new sensibility now in formation is liberalist, pluralist, mature, sophisticated, realistic. Actually, it is not as pluralistic or liberalist as it would like to think. To give a further example of the

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problem, Feher's and Whitebook's tendency towards a reductive and one-sided account of the redemptive paradigm appears again in Wolin's view of the early 20th century avant-garde. In his "Bankruptcy of Left-wing *Kulturkritik*," an otherwise nicely done critical report on a deconstructionist conference which appears not to have been brilliant, Wolin approvingly reconstructs Enzensberger's criticism of the links between the early 20th century artistic avant-garde and the ideology of political vanguardism. Even as a capsule summary, this is too simple and too *partinost*. Those Dadists, Surrealists and Expressionists (for example, Franz Pfemfert and his associates around the libertarian-left-Expressionist journal, *Die Aktion*) who were *anti*-vanguardist simply vanish. The politicized artistic avant-garde is reduced to "chest-thumping artists, armed with their manifestos," "narcissistic . . . purges and counter-purges," "puritanical exclusiveness," and elitism. We are reminded that Breton was known as Le Pape for his personally authoritarian proclivities, but not that his Surrealist Manifestos uphold rather forcefully the rights of the "person *qua* person." Enzensberger's and evidently Wolin's characterizations of the artistic avant-garde have a parallel ambiguity: they are anti-Stalinist, yet their terms ("chest-thumping artists," "puritanical exclusiveness," "narcissistic," and so on) are borrowed from the lexicon of abuse which precisely the Stalinists had heaped on the avant-garde.

The new spirit in *Telos* is not just rhetorically pluralist but actually not so pluralist. It also includes a new coldness, a harshness and on occasion an unpleasantly confident detachment from substantial areas of pain, resistance, despair and hope in contemporary America. At its mildest, this new spirit takes the form of the sort of enthusiastic appraisals of modernity (capitalist rather than Soviet modernity) one finds in the Feher and Whitebook essays. The anguish that has always clung to its achievements, the pain that pervades modernity's progress, seem not to make it onto the new ledger. At its worst, the new sensibility in *Telos* takes the form of the distressingly glib comments on racism that appear in Siegel's review of some recent books on liberalism. Discussing Reagan's electoral support, Siegel cites the Greenberg Analysis Group's study suggesting that Michigan democrats who voted for Reagan did so, finally, for reasons of "deeply felt racial sentiments." No doubt. Does this mean, Siegel asks, that Democrats should cave in to racism? His answer is dramatic. Democrats need not cave in to racism, he suggests, because "idealogical racism" (as opposed to the other sort?) is not the issue since most of those surveyed were, we are told, not acting on the basis of racism *per se*, but on the basis of a "well-justified fear of black street criminals." Not a "perhaps understandable" fear, or a "widespread" fear, or a fear linked to the racism that is part of the very essence of the entire Reagan phenomenon, but a *well-justified* fear of black street criminals. For purposes of civil debate, this can be called an example of a new harshness. Hopefully, it is just nit-picking on this complainant's part.

As noted at the start, there are signs of hope in *Telos 63*. One is in the Paggi and Pinzauti article. Another is that even Feher and Whitebook let some redemption in the back door, and in doing so suggest that the distance between the democratic and redemptive paradigms may not be as great as they claim. They know as well as anyone that the yearnings and struggles for democracy, by large numbers of people and small, are replete with redemptive dimensions: with yearnings at the same time for a radically and even — to use the now nasty word — totally new life. This is grasped in Arendt's discussion in *On Revolution*, to which Feher refers. Notably, Arendt presents the discontinuous history of democratic initiatives in revolutions not in bourgeois but in paradigmatically redemptionist terms as "the lost treasure." And it is grasped again in the "festivities that seized the streets" in the struggles for democracy to which Whitebook

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refers. The yearning for a new life and the critique of modernity along with the push for a democratic civil society are even lurking not far in the background of Habermas' ideal speech situation.

Toward the close of his essay, Feher points to the possibility of a still-acceptable concept of socialism. It will be linked, he says, to the classical liberal idea of proprietorship, to insure that it will not be totalitarian, but will transcend that idea by enabling the proprietorship of all; everyone will be an owner of the social property. Fair enough. But the new socialism will also be linked to the classical redemptive paradigm, which will be transcended by the need for *everyone to become a redeemer.*

AGAINST ADJUSTMENT

by Richard Wolin

In his "The Politics of Redemption" Whitebook cites Feher in support of his suspicions concerning the redemptive paradigm: "Redemption of this world, *not improvement*, was the overt or covert, positive or negative focal point, the historical-philosophical central thesis on which all relevant theories of the left were based on in the pre-World War I era and the period between the wars. Three distinct experiences forced an eschatological radicalism of this kind in [Benjamin] and in others who belonged to the same generation. The first was the ultimate disillusionment in the age and in 'progress.' The second was World War I and the new century born out of the promise of its carnage. And the third was the Russian Revolution, which radiated a new, universal almost cosmic dawn for all our heroes. Only later to become a more critically assessed drama losing much if not all its centrality. All those left intellectuals who were nurtured by these experiences could not accept reform, only radical change for their creed even if this radical need appeared in a particular form in each case."[1] Of course, ultimately there came disillusion with the Soviet model. For some (e.g., Benjamin), the occasion for disillusionment was the Stalin-Hitler pact of 1939. For others, (e.g., Lukács and Bloch), insight into the true nature of Stalinism came as late as the 1950s. Yet, the break with Stalinism is not enough for Whitebook. He still detects strong traces of "eschatological" longing among the thinkers in question with "suspect" Hegelian-Marxist backgrounds, and it is precisely these longings that he would like to see exposed and eliminated.

Whitebook correctly evaluates what is at stake. It is clear that in recent years there has been an increasingly ambivalent relation to Hegelian-Marxism. He observes that the issue of changing theoretical paradigms lies behind the overt political controversies that have emerged recently in *Telos*. But, more generally, the same theoretical disagreements underly increasingly divergent approaches to the problem of political change as a whole: on one side of the "schism," according to Whitebook, one has the partisans of the redemptive paradigm, desirous of a total break with the existing con-

1. Joel Whitebook, "The Politics of Redemption," *Telos* 63 (Spring, 1985), p. 157.

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tinuum of domination, who tend to be more supportive of existing social movements in the West with an emancipatory thrust; on the other hand one finds the Habermasian supporters of a "joyless reformism," who believe an extension and preservation of existing bourgeois freedoms is of the order of the day, who prefer a gradualist, democratic-enlightenment model of social change (hence, their emphasis on the importance of civil liberties and "public spheres"), and who, above all, associate the "redemptive paradigm" with an uncompromising, totalitarian intolerance.

Of course, the criticism of the redemptive paradigm as "undemocratic" (unAmerican?) is reminiscent of a refrain that is only too familiar — unfortunately, a refrain heretofore monopolized by ultra-conservative voices. Now, one should never leave good arguments in the hands of one's enemies. The only problem is that here one is not dealing with good arguments. Similar caricatures of redemptive approaches to philosophy and politics have appeared in Popper's *The Open Society and its Enemies* (1962) and more recently in Glucksmann's *The Master Thinkers* (1977). Popper's volumes represent an extended polemic against dialectical reasoning — a type of thought that he characterizes in his contribution to the *Positivist Dispute* as "intelligence destroying."[2] Glucksmann lumps together thinkers who otherwise have little in common: Fichte, Hegel, Marx, and Nietzche, in order to offer his own private notion of the intellectual precursors of Stalin's Gulag. Yet, the problem of both arguments — and this is the sense in which Whitebook flirts with disaster — is that they systematically rule out the formulation of alternative universes of discourse. It is Popper and company, much more so than Hegel, who crudely proclaim the metaphysical fusion of the "real" and the "rational," insofar as reason is proscribed from ever transcending the real. All we are left with are the timorous, analytical banalities of *raisonnierendes Denken*. This is not to suggest that analytical thinking itself be banished; only that its professed self-sufficiency be seriously called into question, and that its limitations be supplemented by a more radical and bold conception of the mission of reason.

This leads to the crux of the deficiencies of Whitebook's proclamations concerning the redemptive paradigm. That is, Whitebook presents us with a *false dichotomy*: enlightenment vs. redemptive forms of discourse, those who are not for us are against us. Foucault has recently referred to this formulation of alternatives as the "blackmail of enlightenment"[3] — clearly no one wants to be accused of being *against* enlightenment values. However, this is a false dichotomy because both intellectual paradigms, enlightenment and redemptive, have always existed side by side. It is clear that much of enlightenment thought, while not reducible to eschatological thinking, secularizes the latter and derives its inspiration from it. Indeed, enlightenment philosophies of history, such as Condorcet's *Equisse*, display much of the same messianic zeal as their religious precursors — only now the heavenly city must be transposed to a this-worldly setting.[4] Enlightenment materialism — that of e.g., La Mettrie — could be every bit as dogmatic and metaphysical as the philosophical rationalism it strove to lay low. The new celebration of reason by the *philosophes* expected the *redemption* of humanity from a

2. Karl Popper, "Reason or Revolution," in *The Positivist Dispute in German Society*, (London, 1976), p. 289.

3. Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?", in *The Foucault Reader*, Paul Rabinow, ed. (New York, 1984), p. 47. At the same time, there is little doubt that Foucault lies on the wrong side of the dichotomy.

4. One of the better known proponents of the "secularization" thesis is Carl Becker in his *The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth Century Philosophers* (New Haven, 1932). Yet, Becker drastically underestimates the uniqueness of modernity. For a definitive rebuttal of the secularization thesis, see Hans Blumenberg, *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age* (Cambridge, Mass., 1983).

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vast array of worldly evils, injustices, and oppression. It is precisely this redemptive impulse, their utopian longing, that provided them with the stores of motivational conviction necessary to launch the assault on the ancien regime. One cannot have it both ways: Enlightenment sobriety without revolutionary zealotry. Historically speaking, the two went hand in hand. Somehow, Enlightenment ideals ended up in the hands of the Committee of Public Safety. And shortly thereafter they were inherited by Napoleon, who for Feher becomes the prototypical embodiment of the modern redeemer.[5] The alternative between a sober and calm enlightenment paradigm, and an intemperate and fanatical redemptive approach to social change is a false alternative.

It will not wash insofar as it pays insufficient heed (aside from what can only be deemed, given the overall tenor of the article, a token crumb tossed in the direction of "the critique of capitalism") to the ills and injustices that are the necessary concomitant of *modernization qua rationalization*, i.e. the necessarily selective and biased historical realization of the sacrosanct Enlightenment model. Whitebook, following Habermas, seizes on the "counterfactual" normative component of democratic societies — their value-universalism — and presents as trifling consolation the claim that "the system is forced to appeal to [these principles] to carry out its dirty work" (160). What is at stake here is not the counterfactual status of their "bourgeois ideals" acknowledged by Whitebook, but a question of emphasis: the 90% of the iceberg that lies beneath the surface in his account. This occluded dimension pertains to the inequities of modernity: its one-sided historical realization, which accords primacy to the category of instrumental rationality over against all other spheres of life. Whitebook, in the intolerance he displays *vis-à-vis* the redemptive paradigm, shows himself readily willing to dispense with a tradition that has been without equal in the radicality of its critique of the homogenizing tendencies of modernity: its preference for quantitative over qualitative value, its elimination of particularity and local differences, the primacy of formal over substantive reason. The maligned redemptive paradigm represents a tradition that includes Lukács critique of "reification," Bloch's critique of the "darkness of the lived moment," and Benjamin's criticism of the "empty and homogenous continuum of historical time." It is not a question of accepting their "doctrines" *verbatim*. This would be a historical anachronism. Yet, it is clear that this tradition of radical critique is desperately in need of resuscitation and deepening — albeit a historically selective resuscitation and deepening — at the current historical hour as defined by the rising tide of neo-conservatism.

There is a greater danger represented by Whitebook's demonization of the radical intellectual tradition — the danger of a rank capitulation to a type of conformist thinking. By inflexibly anathematizing the redemptive paradigm, one runs the risk of capitulating to the course of the world in its immediacy. One risks eliminating a whole series of potentials for critique which *transcend* the immanently critical standpoint Whitebook would like to rely on exclusively, i.e., the counterfactual status of bourgeois ideals. That bourgeois society has been able to persist for two hundred years, in a state largely untroubled by the counterfactuality of its normative basis, suggests that its counterfactuality is likely to continue in the foreseeable future. Whitebook feels comfortable with this situation in a way others do not. It is clearly not a question of abrogating these norms; they must continue to serve as regulative ideals for any future democratic society. It is instead a question of bringing to bear on modernity a wealth of

5. Feher, "Paradigms in Radical Politics," *Telos* 63 (Spring, 1985), pp. 147-156.

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critical potentials that have been repressed and censured by modernity itself. In sum, what Whitebook's approach has neutered is a capacity for radical transcendence *vis-à-vis* the given as such, a capacity that has always nourished social movements and struggles aspiring to more than merely piecemeal, reformist gains within the established continuum of domination. Perhaps Bloch's philosophy has best exemplified the radical utopian longings which Whitebook — a prisoner of his own sobriety — would like to see exorcised. In his discussions of daydreams, the metaphysical desire for wholeness, the religious desire for salvation, Bloch was able to address a whole series of legitimate human aspirations that seem systematically denied in a rationalized bourgeois cosmos. Similarly Benjamin, in his selective efforts to bring claims of affective rationality/solidarity embodied in traditional forms of life to bear on the instrumentally rational character of capitalist life-forms, was able, by virtue of such tactics, to illuminate deficiencies of modernity that would necessarily remain unintelligible were the latter viewed solely on its own terms. Adorno has drawn the logical consequences from Benjamin's preoccupation with messianic forms of thought for a contemporary notion of cultural criticism: "The only philosophy which can not be responsibly practiced in face of despair is to contemplate all things as they would present themselves *from the standpoint of redemption*. Knowledge has no light but that shed on the world by redemption: all else is reconstruction, mere technique. Perspectives must be fashioned that displace and estrange the world; reveal it to be, with its rifts and crevices, as it will appear one day *in the messianic light*. To gain such perspectives without velleity or violence, entirely from felt contact with objects — this alone is the task of thought. It is the simplest of all things, because the situation calls imperatively for such knowledge, indeed because consummate negativity, once squarely faced, delineates the mirror-image of its opposite. But it is also the utterly impossible thing, because it presupposes a standpoint removed, if only by a hair's breadth from the scope of existence, whereas we well know that any possible knowledge must not only first be wrested from what it is, if it shall hold good, but it is also marked, for this very reason, by the same distortion and indigence it seeks to escape."[6]

Adorno's remarks capture superbly the critical cognitive mission of the redemptive paradigm: the estrangement of the world in its everydayness, the fashioning of perspectives capable of illuminating the world in its deficient immediate state. The defamiliarization of the commonplace performed by the redemptive standpoint remains of no small value in a contemporary social setting in which the counterfactual status of bourgeois ideals grows more tenuous by the hour. That bourgeois formal equality is highly consistent with a large measure of substantive inequality has been known for some time. More important, however, is the growing degree of cynicism of the present-day bourgeois consciousness concerning the original value-basis of capitalist society itself. This is a cynicism that suggests how readily the normative core of bourgeois societies can be dispensed with or repressed when the need arises — e.g., freedom of the press in the case of the Grenada invasion, the most fundamental precepts of modern natural law in the case of the marvelously unsubtle distinction between totalitarian and authoritarian regimes. In the latter instance, egregious abuses of human rights can be tolerated insofar as these regimes are "friendly toward us." Yet, the entrenched cynicism of bourgeois society *vis-à-vis* its own universalistic normative foundations has always been a problem, insofar as such substantive norms have been historically paired with a *utilitarian ethos* that tends to value pragmatic considerations of

6. Theodor Adorno, *Minima Moralia* (London, 1974), p. 247. Italics added.

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functional efficacy over questions of "right." As we move further away from the historical triumph of bourgeois societies toward an increasingly defensive, conservative phase, their normative origins are more and more relegated to a quaint, primeval past — perhaps an interesting object of study for classes in the history of political philosophy, but with little bearing on the immediate historical present. These observations suggest an ironic scenario whereby critics of bourgeois life take its outmoded values more seriously than the bourgeoisie itself. To be sure, this is not a purely negative phenomenon. Yet, an appeal to the powers of immanent criticism in an era in which belief in the counterfactual norms of bourgeois society has fallen so low can only ring increasingly hollow. To paraphrase Gertrude Stein, "There is no there there," yet, it is this "there" that Whitebook, in the absence of the redemptive paradigm, would like exclusively to rely on. But it is precisely the unabashed triumph of a utilitarian common consciousness that makes a direct appeal to this admirable normative heritage so anachronistic and simplistic.

The chief drawback of Whitebook's position is that it comes close to degenerating into an obsequious apologia for "modernity." He runs this risk insofar as his argumentation remains as undialectical as the rhetoric of redemption he castigates so relentlessly: whereas the advocates of a redemptive politics see no redeeming features in modernity, Whitebook conversely sees no redeeming features in the redemptive longing *tout court*. However, the longing for wholeness, for totality, for fulfillment, can hardly be excised once and for all with the precision of a surgical strike — the measure recommended by Whitebook's killingly sober "politics of maturity." Even Whitebook's great hero of the Enlightenment era, Immanuel Kant, avows this fact quite openly, by emphasizing in the first *Critique* that our reason is uncontrollably driven beyond the limitations of the "bounds of sense" in the direction of supersensible employment. The desire to know the unconditioned, to bring to bear the state of perfection embodied therein upon the indigence of the human condition, has been a constant inspiration of all utopian political longing. Instead of being outlawed *ex cathedra*, it is essential that these energies be tapped for the sake of constructive, worldly ends. In the logic of exclusion he embraces, Whitebook himself displays precisely those homogenizing, intolerant features of modernity that the "revolutionary nihilism" (Benjamin) of modernity's intellectual and artistic critics has always rebelled against. The desire for sensuousness, gratification, and fulfillment in the here and now, for the realization of the eternally delayed *promesse de bonheur*, has characterized the assault against bourgeois hypocrisy from Baudelaire, to Nietzsche, to the twentiety century avant-garde. What is needed is not the *repression* of such energies, but their rechanneling along progressive political lines: indeed, along lines that seek to preserve precisely those formal achievements of the bourgeois order that have blinded Whitebook to their more sinister dimensions. That is to say, these energies must not be left in the hands of those opponents of modernity interested in regressing behind its established thresholds: this was the case with the German Youth movement of the 1910s, in which the soil fertile for the development of National Socialism was cultivated. In contrast, the youth movement of the 1960s had a very different focus. Though it was catalyzed by analagous, anti-modernist sentiments, its political wing for a while was able to resuscitate claims to an authentic, participatory democracy traditionally suppressed by conventional party politics. Yet, this partisanship for radical democracy would have been unthinkable had it not been accompanied by the radical *cultural* critique of the same era, which drew is inspiration from the redemptive *promesse de bonheur* that Whitebook can only view with suspicion.

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To be sure, the antimony with which Whitebook presents us — a politics of maturity vs. a politics of redemption — is suspiciously reminiscent of the Weberian alternative between an ethic of responsibility and an ethic of ultimate ends. In conclusion, perhaps we would do well to keep the precise nature of the Weberian formulation of the problem in mind. Weber is acutely aware of the shortcomings of both positions, even if, as a realist in an era of revolutionary turmoil, his dominant sympathies lie with the ethic of responsibility. However, he is also painfully conscious of the limitations of an ethic of responsibility if left to its own devices. After all, it was largely his own ethos, its austere rationalism and sobriety, that resulted in a prosaic and disenchanted, bourgeois cosmos of capitalist rationalization. The failings of this despiritualized life-order in Weber's eyes are too well known to merit rehearsing in the present context. What is especially worthy of note is that Weber's unsparing criticisms of the failings of "modernity" lead him to no small measure of sympathy with at least the critical components of the redemptive position. For the same reasons, Weber ultimately refuses to opt simplistically for a politics of responsibility as a self-sufficient mode of life conduct. This would be a solution that would cede too much to an already overly routinized life-world. Instead, he insists, an ethic of responsibility must at times be complemented by the resolve and conviction of an ethic of absolute ends: "It is immediately moving when a *mature* man — no matter whether old or young in years — is aware of a responsibility for the consequences of his conduct and really feels such responsibility with heart and soul. He then acts by following an ethic of responsiblity and somewhere he reaches the point where he says: 'Here I stand; I can do no other.' That is something genuinely human and moving. And every one of us who is not spiritually dead must realize the possibility of finding himself at some time in that position. In so far as this is true, an ethic of ultimate ends and an ethic of responsibility are not absolute contrasts but rather supplements, which can only in unison constitute a genuine man — a man who *can* have the 'calling for politics'."[7]

7. Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation," *From Max Weber* (New York, 1946), p. 127.

THEORETICAL AMNESIA

by Moishe Gonzales

Conventional wisdom has it that there is — or at least there ought to be — a correspondence between theoretical and political positions. But the very labelling of it as conventional wisdom already betrays its falsity. Sure enough, any careful examination of the record readily reveals that this correspondence hardly ever obtains. No such parallel can be drawn for the Hegelians who split into Right and Left wings with qualitatively different positions, e.g., the German Young Hegelians and the British neo-Hegelians at the end of the last century. Nor is that true for Marxists who bifurcated into Social Democrats and Bolsheviks, or for the existentialists who produced Sartre and Merleau-Ponty, as well as Kierkegaard and Marcel. One could go on but, if anything, a correspondence between theory and politics is the exception rather than the rule.

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Given this state of affairs, it is strange to find Whitebook trotting out precisely this wrong-headed conventional wisdom in trying to make sense out of recent internal *Telos* debates which, if anything, should have remained entirely internal. In his "Politics of Redemption" he claims that recent internal dissention has resulted when the journal finally sought to "come out of the theoretical closet and take a stand on urgent political questions."[1] These political differences presumably boil down to a split between those who still share, at least in spirit, the objectives of Western Marxism, and those who like himself do not. The implication is that, while differences remained merely on a theoretical level, they were manageable. Once they were translated into concrete political stands they became practically unbearable. This is a simplification which is not only wrong, but also has the added disadvantage of considerably clouding the issues. As with most of what he has to say about either redemption or democracy, his account is, at best, highly counterfactual. There are, of course, both theoretical as well as political differences within any group working together over a significant length of time. But in order for these differences to be relevant they would have to exhibit some internal coherence or, at least, translate unproblematically from the theoretical to the political level and vice-versa. Otherwise they remain little more than minor family squabbles to which no further ideological significance can be attached. Lacking any such coherence, it does not make sense — even for psychoanalysts — to go digging in the journal's collective unconscious for explanations.

Now, it is well-known that there are, on the theoretical level, deep fissures between not "redemptionists" and "democrats," but between a neo-Adornian "artificial negativity" faction, and another which, for lack of a better name, could be called the Habermaniac group. Yet, there is absolutely no correlation between this division and those which have developed in connection with various political questions. Consider two specific debates which have recently generated substantial amounts of internal heat: the peace movement question and the lesser publicized Lebanon invasion discussion. In neither of these issues did the divisions reflect in any way the theoretical party-lines of neo-Adornians (alleged redemptionists) vs. Habermaniacs (alleged democrats). In the case of the peace movement debate, the two main supporters were one alleged democrat and one alleged redemptionist versus two alleged democrats and three alleged redemptionists. In the case of the Lebanon invasion debate, on the other hand, it was two alleged redemptionists and one alleged democrat against almost everyone else from both camps. Furthermore, there is no minimal coherence between the same democrats and the same redemptionists lining up in one particular camp in either case. One could cite additional examples to further show that, while there are theoretical differences, these seem to have very little to do with political, aesthetic, sexual or dietary differences concerning which the composition of the warring factions is never the same. Conclusion: theoretical differences (which certainly exist) have practically nothing to do with political differences (which also exist). Hence, to exorcise the "politics of redemption" may be an intersting philosophical exercise, but a completely meaningless one in terms of shedding any light on the source of either political or philosophical differences.

Furthermore, a careful reading of Whitebook's abstract philosophical exercise reveals that, far from taking a step beyond the journal's earlier theoretical position, his attempt to transcend what he euphemistically calls "the politics of redemption" is actually a regression and betrays a much more serious theoretical amnesia. It is not

1. Joel Whitebook, "The Politics of Redemption," in *Telos*, n. 63 (Spring 1985), p. 157.

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entirely true that *Telos*' internal consensus began to shatter with the abandonment of Western Marxism (which goes back to 1975) and the confrontation of more immediate political questions (which dates back to 1982). In fact, from the very beginning, the reception of Western Marxism had taken place from quite different philosophical frameworks. One needs only compare the various interpretations of Lukács published around 1971-1972 to realize that there were neo-Kantian, neo-Hegelian, and even *lebensphilosophische* perspectives. What provided internal cohesion at that time was not any philosophical consensus but, rather, a shared belief in the *political* function of the journal's philosophical program: the retrival of a Western Marxism successfully repressed by both Stalinism and McCarthyism, and the rediscovery of those extraneous or even "idealist" foundations which made this Western Marxism so much more interesting and politically relevant than any garden variety of its various orthodox counterparts, from Trotskyism to Maoism.

What shattered the internal consensus, therefore, was not, if anything, what Whitebook suggests as a shift to more concrete political issues since, by and large, with the possible exception of irrelevant details such as the evaluation of the emancipatory potentials of the German peace movement, there is and there has always been fundamental agreement on most political levels, from the analysis of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, to Reagan's policies, to European socialism, etc. It was, rather, the *fulfillment* of the original project and subsequent problems concerning political identity that has generated conflict. Having re-threaded the troubled trajectory of Western Marxism and rediscovered its fatal flaws, *Telos* had reluctantly reached the conclusion that, although that tradition has been defeated primarily by the secret police in Europe and the FBI at home, it could neither be salvaged or mended. What we had effectively done had thus been to give it the kind of dignified academic burial it deserved in the first place.

Yet, to the extent that *Telos* does not exist in a vacuum independently of broader socio-political phenomena, it is not surprising that it is not only effected by them but, to a great extent, reflects them. Thus, it could not avoid the general phenomenon of the academization of radicalism and the consequent depoliticization of critical thought. It so happened that *Telos* editors were also academics for whom, at least during the golden days of the late 1960s-early 1970s, political practice and career goals happily coincided. The rediscovery and critical re-elaboration of Western Marxism was both politically relevant to what most of us thought the New Left ought to be doing, *and* professionally convenient in that it generated whole shelves of successfully defended Ph.D. dissertations. Western Marxism and critical theory were both political projects and careers which, however, came to an end with the publication of the last, and this time definitive, obituary of Western Marxism.

When it became necessary to *re-define Telos*' political project (rather than, as Whitebook intimates, being "forced to adapt explicit positions on difficult political questions") the elaboration of a critical theory of society, at least for some, no longer smoothly mashed with our social role. The critique of Leninism expanded to a general suspicion of the "leading role" of intellectuals and, for reasons different from theirs, some began to heed the neo-conservatives' critique of the "new class." After all, even if Hitler were to say that 2+2=4 that does not make it wrong. Occasionally one has to recognize that even political opponents can come up with something intelligent. At any rate, although any class analysis had long since been given up as intrinsically useless, there remained the lingering suspicion that social consciousness may still have something to do with social being. Economic reductionism had been thoroughly

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rejected, but that never meant that suddenly politics become a heavenly vocation for angels — *res cogitans* free of all the constraints common mortals are unfortunately constantly confronted with. Consequently, the academization of radicalism in general and Marxism in particular may have had unpalatable political implications for the new breed of radical professors we had become. So, it is not surprising that a major effort was made to forcibly extend the no-longer tenable correspondence between politics and careers, even after it had become suspect. In this context, the main split within *Telos* became one between those wanting to prolong at all costs our happy intellectual adolescence with its professional-political identity by merely finding a suitable substitute for the now defunct Western Marxism, and those who came to realize that not only are the two no longer identical, but that they may actually clash. This does not mean that one had to stop being an intellectual or an academic but, rather, that self-serving illusions be given up in order to confront the contradictory predicament of academic radicalism as merely another means to reproduce and uphold existing social relations. Whitebook is at least partially correct in claiming that this latter position he libelously characterizes as "the Left counter-enlightenment" results in ultra-leftism on the one hand, and hibernation on the other. He is wrong, however, in concluding that this can only lead to a search for some external redemptive agency. It can also result, as it did with some of the neo-Adornians within *Telos*, in an attempt to locate emancipatory elements earlier identified with a no longer existing opposition within the logic of the given: instrumentalized emancipation whose main function is regulation and reinforcement of that *status quo* it opposes but from which it also derives its very sustenance. And here the plot thickens for it is now that which was historically identified as the *fons et origo malorum* (monopoly capital) that takes on an emancipatory function *in spite of itself* as a strategy of further rationalization and growth. But here we are getting prematurely too far into an elaboration of the artificial negativity thesis as a version of neo-Adornian critical theory.

The conflict between these two political positions within the journal has resulted in a peculiar situation. While there has not been any major clash about "difficult political questions" concerning which, to reiterate, there still is considerable internal consensus, there have been harsh theoretical exchanges (e.g., the Whitebook-D'Amico conflicting evaluations of Castoriadis[2]). Yet, these differences have not resulted in any major factional rupture. Although the two outlooks entail qualitatively different new political projects — and this is the kernel of Whitebook's attack — *Telos* remains big enough to accommodate both of them and more. At any rate, as with almost all radical professors, almost no one in *Telos* engaged in any significant political activity. Thus, the question was always a moot one, or, worse yet, academic. So, while the allegedly democratic paradigm retreats to a defense of the existing theoretical capital and, at best, seeks to provide — to use Feher's words — a "social service"[3] to emancipatory political movements, the allegedly redemptive paradigm holds on to a *total* critique of existing society while acknowledging both political impotence and refusing to capitulate to the temptation to locate emancipation in every ripple within the "totally administered society" as in the old discredited Left oppositional model (the various rainbow coalitions being fantisized in every corner of the traditional Left that still pretend to exist).

2. Cf. Joel Whitebook, review of Cornelius Castoriadis, *Crossroads in the Labyrinth*, in *Telos*, n. 63 (Spring 1985), pp. 228-239; and Robert D'Amico's reply in *Telos*, n. 64 (Summer 1985).

3. Ferenc Feher, "Redemptive and Democratic Paradigms in Radical Politics," in *Telos*, n. 63 (Spring 1985), p. 156.

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Having indulged in this biographical excursus primarily in order to rectify Whitebook's onesided reconstruction (he was originally urged to edit out that particularly inaccurate part of his account, but he adamantly refused to have his position altered in the least) it is now time to confront his theoretical position which is a manifesto for the so-called "democratic paradigm." The very labels, however, already present problems. Democratic vs. redemptive paradigms? What kind of Madison Avenue packaging of the issue is this? Years ago we would have simply spoken of "reformist" vs. "revolutionary," or "bourgeois" vs. "radical" outlooks. How did the old contraposition end up redefined in these terms? And what does it entail? Obviously, by associating opponents with a very questionable theological category and labelling oneself as "democratic" already prejudges the issue. If, when one thinks of redemption the models involved are those Feher proposes: Napoleon, Mussolini, Hitler, Stalin, etc.; while its opposite, the "democratic" paradigm is identified with Solidarity and rational discourse, how can one possibly opt for "redemption" even as merely a sedimented "collective thinking of the journal" and be against the democratic paradigm? This is not an altogether honest way of posing the question. It is a linguistic trick meant to occlude the real conflict between what can be described, in Whitebook's Madison Avenue style, as a tired conformist academic outlook and one that, notwithstanding all the problems with attempts to generate the "new man" during the 20th century, still regards the utopian dimension as politically essential and considers the search for qualitative change as the *sine qua non conditio* of critical thought. Whitebook is clearly at home within the logic of the given and all he seeks is its deliberate extension. This, however, is one of the simplest definitions of *conservatism.* While, of course, Whitebook is entitled to whatever political position he finds suitable, his distorted depiction of the "radical" or "critical" — certainly not "redemptive" — paradigm cannot be left unchallanged.

The neo-Adornian assumptions Whitebook finds buried within the journal's collective unconscious are the 1) modernity is seen as so totally corrupt that 2) only a radical Other can possibly redeem it, but 3) this can take place only independently of instrumental reason seen as the sole type of reason excluding 4) the all-important practical reason thus resulting in 5) a disparagement of the achievements of bourgeois subjective freedom and the advocacy of 6) an ineffectual ultra-leftism condemned by its very grandiosity to hibernation and impotence. In fact, within *Telos* there are some who see the commodity form as penetrating all areas of human existence (whether this amounts to a *total* corruption of modernity is irrelevant here), but who also realize that there is no radical Other outside each and everyone of us, and that this process of administrative encroachment in the life-world (in the original Husserlian rather than the weak, self-contradictory Habermasian sense) undermines the very possibility of autonomous individuality thus ruling out any creative dimension (Whitebook calls this practical reason) other than what falls within the logic of the cash-nexus and instrumental rationality resulting in the undermining of the very possibility of democracy in the glorified form Whitebook's liberal paradigm advocates.

From such a viewpoint, what Whitebook proposes as the politics of *Mündigkeit* tend to appear more like the politics of senility suffering from amnesia since the "person" he sees as the most lasting achievement of modernity is either already irrelevant or rapidly fading. Thus, any democratic paradigm built upon it can only be illusory and ideological in the sense of legitimating the present process of social disintegration as allegedly emancipatory. Anyway, from a neo-Adornian perspective, the Habermasian linguistified effort to ground a counterfactual democracy on an equally counterfactual

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individuality has the interesting consequence, if successful, of *de facto* advocating the empowerment of intellectuals and ultimately displace existing relations of domination with new ones: the intellectuals presumably displace the bourgeoisie in a society equally characterized by new forms of domination and dependence.

Symptomatically, neither in Whitebook or in Habermas is there any mention of alienation and the dialectic. If, however, "really existing democracies" not only are afflicted by alienation as an inherent condition engendered, not by the production process in the factory as in the silly orthodox Marxist model, but by the culture industry and the totally administered society, and far from declining this process is growing because it is structurally rooted, then the incompleteness of modernity has no chance of ever being completed but tends to become increasingly incomplete and ultimately, in principle, unrealizable. What Whitebook dismisses as mere pathologies of modernity are, in fact, its essence. Capitalism — monopoly or otherwise — (and not euphemisms such as "market-relations" or "market rationality" that Whitebook prefers after perfunctorily professing to keep in mind that critique of capitalism which he has obviously long since forgotten) requires the kind of stable growth predicated on a constant rationalization that rules out autonomous individuality or, if it artificially attempts to reconstitute it, it does so only as part of a new strategy of rationalization instrumentalizing emancipation itself. The penetration of the lifeworld in the sense of reconstituting character structure and personality is part of this process of rationalization of production, consumption and, most of all, profitability. In fact, today this process has gone so far that it has become counterproductive thus triggering — as a coherent extension of this logic of rationalization — efforts to artificially reconstitute a minimal individuality to help regulate the whole administrative apparatus within a context where it is stucturally ruled out.

To his credit, Whitebook subtly de-emphasizes Habermas' linguistic side. It is this feature of his "new and improved" brand of critical theory that casts a dark ideological shadow on the whole effort. If in the political dimension now disdainfully uncoupled from economics and power relations and hypostatized to the level of a counterfactual civil society populated by similarly counterfactual individuals constantly engaged in equally counterfactual ideal speech situations, only linguistically competent (non-alienated) individuals can fully participate, then, clearly, intellectuals who traditionally live by language and ideas, come to occupy a privileged position. If one extends the notion of intellectuals to cover not just people who deal merely with ideas and language (humanistic intellectuals) but also people who monopolize knowledge as experts and professionals (scientific intellectuals), then it is easy to see how they can readily turn into administrators and feed into the totally administered society not as the old Bolshevik redeemers, but as the infamous "new class" of Gouldner, Konrad and Szelenyi. Fortunately, as with almost anything that has any remote relation to politics in Habermas, this ideal new class schema is also counterfactual. In reality, politics is not that independent of economics and capital evaporates into mere market relations only in Whitebook's counterfactual modernity. Notwithstanding their brilliant linguistic competence, intellectuals, by and large, remain mothballed in increasingly irrelevant universities while actors, businessmen, lawyers and the like run the country. The future of this linguistified new and improved critical theory appears to be nothing but increasing counterfactuality.

To put the matter more crudely, almost at an *ad hominem* level, repented Marxists disillusioned with the communist Utopia that has turned into a Gulag tend to retreat to the "democratic paradigm" as a defense tactic which subsequently translates into the

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whole political strategy. What happens here is that one's earlier allies and beliefs tend to become anathema and the whole outlook demonized. Thus, for Whitebook, the neo-Adornian position is "Left counter-enlightenment" (as, e.g., in counter-reformation — a futile reactionary strategy to roll the clock back with terroristic means to presumably gone forever golden ages of pre-modernity). But did Adorno or any of this followers ever even hint at this? If there is something Adorno disliked with a passion, it was precisely a Romantic reaction he extended so far as to even include the Nazis. Whatever one may think of reconciliation with nature, in Adorno this is neither counter-enlightenment nor Romantic reaction. Here Whitebook may be confusing Adorno with his former anarchist teachers who have been repeatedly attacked — rightly or wrongly — for alleged pre-modernist longings. At any rate, it is clear that not *all* criticisms of modernity collapse either in romantic pre-modern nostalgia or, more fashionably, into post-modern nihilism. It is possible to criticize modernity as in principle *incompletable* because of its inextricability with capitalism and the dialectic of the enlightenment (Habermas' linguistic side-stepping of it notwithstanding), without necessarily falling into a previously discarded automatic linear view of history allowing only a pre-modernity to stand before a sacrosanct modernity, and a silly post-modernity to oppose it. This type of theoretical closure is not only a dogmatic deduction but also runs counter to the very pretended openness of the self-congratulatory so-called "democratic" paradigm.

Whitebook is against "totalistic transformation" (notice: total apparently is not sufficiently strong; it is total*istic* transformation, as in demon*ic* and dogmat*ic*). He wants merely to extend the given and make it stick to its promises despite their counterfactual status. *Mündigkeit* here is reminiscent of the predicament of a pensioner who, upon retirement, begins to suspect that his old age will not be taken care of. Here any challanging of the whole is too disrupting. Who will sign the Social Security checks? Unfortunately, in this world — and probably in others as well — there are no absolute guarantees. Furthermore, what can a *total* (not totalistic) transformation possibly mean? Even the wildest Utopians in their most outrageous moments never meant anything more than a change in structure resulting in a qualitative change in the character of the people involved. Civil society (a bad ideological rendition of the old "bourgeois society" which, however, does not sound all that compromised) *could* become a community, not in the feudal pre-modern sense, but in a new sense where the centrality of the cash-nexus and of exchange relations no longer obtains. *Homo economicus* could, in this new social context, blossom into *homo faber* and develop new forms of social relations. While it is far from clear how this could take place and under what conditions, it need not be, in the meantime, banished as dangerously religious or potentially totalitarian. When that happens, the politics of *Mündigkeit* will have deteriorated to those of Edmund Burke.

As Wolin has shown,[4] the Enlightenment always has a "redemptive" utopian underside and the two cannot be so easily separated. Modernity cannot be cleansed out of its untidy "redemptive" past by re-packaging the history of the last two hundred years in a re-make of *Die Zerstörung der Vernunft* — this time with democracy displacing communism in the world-historical struggle between rationalism and irrationalism. As in Lukács' account, Feher also has to fudge with the historical record to have all the "cowboys" triumph as rational democrats, and all "indians" perish as irrational redemptionists.[5] After all, democracy is a *means* — even if a very desirable one at that — to allow

4. Richard Wolin, "Against Adjustment," in this issue of *Telos*.
5. Feher, "Redemptive and Democratic Paradigms . . .", *op. cit.*

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us to vote in the good society and, once that is done, to keep it that way. When the means becomes the end for not better reason than to exorcise the phantom of a fanatical totalitarianism, the very democratic project has already been effectively subverted by having been deprived of precisely that utopian horizon that has always fueled it. No matter how procedurally correct, it is difficult to cherish a democratic society that votes in the Nazis or remains paralyzed in an idealized counterfactual present for fear the utopian dream may entail that totalitarian price which has already been paid when obsession with the real makes it impossible to transcend it or modify it.

Whitebook, of course, is aware of the dangers involved in extending administrative rationality (the bureaucratic other side of the so-called "democratic paradigm") into the lifeworld and thus enjoining it from dreaming. Unfortunately, his notion of the lifeworld is a totally administered one mediated by ordinary language[6] and characterized by public discourse.[7] While it is difficult to imagine how instincts can engage in distorted or undistorted communication in Oxford English, it is easy to imagine how the concept of the lifeworld has been kidnapped out of its *lebensphilosophische* theoretical context and instrumentalized to provide conceptual luster to the old decrepit notion of "the private" — which is all Whitebook and Habermas ultimately really mean by it. While in Husserl the lifeworld was the domain of immediate lived experience, pre-rational and pre-categorical, thus providing a grounding for reason and values, for Whitebook this is not sufficiently rational and turns into that traditional black hole defended as the private domain. In this sense, resistence to expanding administrative rationality in the defense of the lifeworld is nothing more than a re-cycling of the old conservative call for minimal government and the unencumbered unfolding of market relations. In the 1980s such a call can only mean giving a free hand to monopoly capital and the ruthless dismantling of the welfare state — not necessarily bad ideas in themselves, but certainly having nothing to do with genuine long-term emancipation. This is what critical theory has come to mean to some of its right-wing advocates. Administrative rationality could not have penetrated it any more thoroughly.

As with earlier bourgeois projects of emancipation from feudal domination, Whitebook also attacks metaphysics, religion and absolutes. But this is the middle 1980s, not the 1790s, so, instead of the King, the Pope and God, the targets are . . . the remnants of the New Left now suspected of harboring unconscious redemptive ideas and exhibiting a covert lack of appreciation of democratic norms. And to add insult to injury, Whitebook closes with the suggestion that all this redemptive radicalism really has to do with a pathological break with paternal authority. Unlike in *Totem and Taboo* where the brothers successfully knock off the father, contemporary redemptionists have botched the job, thus paying for it by failing to attain maturity. This is plain silly and probably a result of reading too many fairy tales while watching re-runs of *Godfather* movies.

When all is said and done, there is very little that can be redeemed out of the politics of *Mündigkeit* which is more like a *Kinderkrankheit* of early liberalism a century and a half later when, because of age, it has turned into Altzheimer's disease.

6. Whitebook, "The Politics of Redemption," *op. cit.*, p. 163.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 165.

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REPLY TO SCUDDER

by David Buxton

Many of the younger generation of intellectuals, highly critical of the increasing penetration of the market into every sphere of daily life, nevertheless bristle at the merest suggestion that Talking Heads, Bruce Springsteen or whoever else that manifests their irrefutably good taste be subject to the same critical attention. Rock music, it seems, in the United States at least, is one of those social phenomena most impermeable to critical discussion.

Decidedly, my article (*Telos* 57) touched a raw nerve in Scudder. The frenzied tone of his reply and the almost wilfully obtuse misreading of my arguments (never did I argue for a conspiracy of capitalist interests — quite the contrary) suggests that something is badly wrong. The normal criteria of intellectual debate are set aside in favor of accusations and counter-assertions devoid of supporting argument: after all, everyone is a bit of an expert on rock music are they not? As is shown by the recent exchange between Kellner and Gonzalez (*Telos* 62), there is a fundamental ambiguity in the American Left's attitude to popular culture. Insofar as analysis of rock is concerned, is there no way out of the polemical impasse implied by Scudder: between straw-man Buxton's capitalist conspiracy and Scudder's "transcendent aesthetic quality" with "enormous potential for liberation"?

This argument is not a new one. It is no exaggeration to say that all the work hitherto carried out on the *meaning* of pop/rock that goes beyond mere textual exegesis oscillates between two classical and antagonistic positions within the Marxist tradition.[1] For Adorno, the social meaning of pop music is entirely determined by its commodity status, leading to a homogenous, soporific consciousness. For Benjamin, on the other hand, the technology of the mass media (mechanical reproduction on a vast scale) produces a collective meaning for cultural objects, opening up the possibility for cultural struggles within the capitalist cultural industries.

There are enormous political ambiguities in these two positions. Adorno's strictures against commercial popular music can and have been used to bolster an elite culture or defend a lost organic culture of mythical harmony. Both left and right-wing critics of mass culture have argued along similar lines, strongly influencing radical supporters of folk music who criticized rock for its commercialization and its complicity with electronic technology. A political conservative like David Holbrook is quite close to Adorno when he argues that teenagers are exploited and manipulated by a "youth culture" artificially created by commercial interests. But Holbrook's attacks on Rock's decadence ("the attitude to sexual love in the "pop" song is so ugly and mechanical as to seem schizoid and psychopathological") placed him on the wrong side of the "sexual revolution" which was closely implicated with rock music in the 1960s. Other conservative sociologists in the 1950s defended mass culture against leftist critics, stressing "democratic free choice" of consumers in the marketplace.

The vigor and variety of rock in the 1960s and its explicit attachment with the counter-culture forced left-wing critics to revise their judgements. Rock critics like

1. For more detailed argument, see my *Le rock: star-système et société de consommation* (La Pensée Sauvage, Grenoble, 1985).

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Greil Marcus in the United States and Mich Farren in Great Britain insisted on the active role of rock consumers in imposing their own meaning on a mass product, a position which is incidentially similar to that of conservative 1950s mass-media sociologists. The position of Benjamin seemed to apply, if not to film and television, at least to rock which became a positive example of the possibilities of cultural struggle for the counter-culture. It was not so much that Benjamin had replaced Adorno: rather, the opposition between these two axes was reproduced *within* the terrain of commercial popular music. Thus, while rock was an authentic form of popular expression, "commercial pop music" represented the soporific consciousness condemned by Adorno. In effect, both rock and pop were products in the marketplace, forms of mass culture: the radical distinction between them was necessarily highly arbitrary and subjective, a position which continues to this day even if the terms of the argument have changed. In 1969, David Laing formulated a classic compromise: rock is a terrain of struggle, the meaning of cultural products being "squeezed out" in the conflict between the commerical machinations of the big record companies and the radical aspirations of youth.[2] This position, a considerable advance on the short-sighted dismissal of commerical music common on the left, has become something of an orthodoxy beyond criticism, if Scudder's outraged reaction is any indication. It has the advantage of allowing one to combine criticism of the corporate organization of the music industry with (exaggerated) enthusiasm for the latest rock subculture.

My article was an attempt to break away from this impasse. First, it is static: one tends to see rock as a perpetual war between two pre-established oppositions. In the 1960s, rock won, in the 1970s, commerce won but as for round three . . . This opposition tends to stabilize into a cyclical notion of development in rock whereby all innovation becomes magical, obeying a mysterious law which assures that "something interesting must emerge sooner or later." This leads to a curiously passive conception of the organization of popular music wherein corporate domination reigns supreme, even if subject to periodic broadsides or, more frequently, a knowing cynicism.

Second, this position obliges us to accept the "radicalism" of rock subcultures at face value, as if the latter were not subject to the ambiguities and contradictions that characterize all social phenomena. My article, which documents the realization of certain consumerist themes through the arcane meanderings of the counter-culture and even drug subcultures — surely, the opposite of any capitalist conspiracy thesis — , does not imply that this is all that can be said about rock or the 1960s counter-culture. But it will be a sign of intellectual maturity in this domain if we can go beyond gung-ho enthusiasm for the latest subculture and its necessary obverse, moralistic accusations of recuperation by capitalist forces. Some serenity is needed here: even if one does not share my explicitly Foucauldian assumptions that the formation of subjectivity is also, to a greater or lesser extent, the formation of subjection to the dominant order, we should be able to agree that popular subcultures are invested by contradictory social projects (for example, the 1960s counter-culture pushed back traditional bourgeois morality but also allowed for the extension of the market into new areas by so doing). I agree with Scudder that popular subcultures should be encouraged for building more sophisticated political identities, on condition that "political" in this case be interpreted extremely broadly and indirectly. But surely this recognition implies first a far more critical approach to popular subcultures than has hitherto been the case and second, and more importantly, an exploration of the conditions in which such subcultures can emerge and push their points of departure much further rather than ending up as slogans on teeshirts.

2. David Laing, *The Sound of our Time,* Sheen and Ward, London, 1969.

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This is the central issue. For too long, the left has been overly concerned with the purely symbolic political posturings of various subcultures. If we can at last agree that popular subcultures are worthwhile for their own sake in the enrichment of everyday life ("political" spinoffs being an added bonus), then it is surely important to turn our attention to the contention that the material infrastructure which allowed for the artistic development of rock during the 1960s (small clubs where groups could experiment with new styles, genuinely independent labels etc.) no longer exists. In consequence, the future promises little more than the absolute domination of the most vacuous "stadium rock" and the proliferation of ever-shorter cycles of star-images that are quite literally meaningless.

One may legitimately argue over what is to be done about this sad state of affairs. In my admittedly overly-condensed response, I argued for the establishment of a "public sphere" in the domain of popular music, in other words, some form of public intervention to counterbalance the present oligopoly of multinationals which are manifestly more interested in the massive profits generated by a handful of superstars than in cultural innovation. As all rock historians are agreed, "innovation" has always emerged in independent companies on the margins of the industry. It is therefore both culturally and politically important that such companies should exist in less precarious conditions ("adapt or die") or better, thrive and proliferate. One way in which the state could intervene without having power of judgement of who or what is to be produced is to set up an alternative distribution network along the lines of a public service (for it is through control of distribution than the record multinationals stifle creativity). Other possibilities include financial advantages for small clubs etc. This is not just a demand for state handouts: an enlarged, thriving alternative popular music sector could generate employment. As it stands the present organization of the industry along totally private lines is a massive appropriation of social wealth to negative ends: in a steadily declining industry, the vast majority of records do not even cover their (absurdly inflated) costs. As with the film industry, now a shadow of its former self, the search for profits at all costs has led to the "sabotage" of the music industry: in effect, a wide variety of actual or potential tastes have been abandoned by the market. If my proposals for public intervention sound "utopian," it is only because of the ultraconservative drift since the crisis and the lack of a tradition of intervention in this domain.

Public intervention is obviously not a panacea: enormous problems remain in the relations of force between the state and civil society. I am simply proposing that a public sphere be the site of debate: in effect, it is politically important to go beyond the (perhaps understandable) obsession of the 1960s counterculture with the purely repressive functions of the state, a position which is ultimately concordant with unregulated "free" enterprise.[3] Finally, the establishment of an infrastructure for alternative forms of popular culture does not guarantee their quality but is the minimum condition for their existence. It is only through the anchorage of an alternative infrastructure that we can go beyond the sterile opposition between "active" and "passive" consumption: the former can exist only when consumption is no longer dissociated from the popular creation of demand.

3. For example, counterculture ideologue Charles Reich argued that in the "corporate state," the frontier between the public and the private had disappeared (Reich, *The Greening of America,* Random House, 1970, p. 91). In Britain, Jim Haynes, editor of the counterculture magazine *IT,* argued that the state was worse than free enterprise ("capitalism, as a concept, is not so bad . . . what's bad is exploiting people, not the institution itself"). Haynes interview, *Actuel 13* (Paris), 1969. More recently, right-wing futurists like John Naisbitt have acknowledge the importance of counter-culture ideas in the "entrepreneurial boom" of the late 1970s. See Naisbitt, *Megatrends,* Warner Books, New York, 1982.

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Reviews

Jonathan Rieder, *Canarsie: The Jews and Italians of Brooklyn Against Liberalism*, Harvard University Press (Cambridge, Ma.: 1985)

Canarsie is a lower middle class neighborhood on the eastern edge of Brooklyn. For generations a district of junk yards, refuse dumps and marsh land, its name has long been used by New Yorkers to epitomize everything that is isolated, grimy and parochial about the outer rim of the metropolis ("Go to Canarsie" serves as a polite substitute for "Go to Hell" for Bronx natives of a certain age). In the mid 1970s, when most of the marshes had been filled in and covered with block after block of small single family houses, Canarsie's unsavory reputation took on another dimension. After making headlines with a series of demonstrations, school boycotts and bombings, Canarsie became known as a center of what was being called the "while backlash": militant resistance to racial integration on the part of northern, lower middle class, "ethnic" whites. Even more notable than this movement's racism was its lashing out against those perceived as the allies of the blacks: intellectuals, social planners and liberals.

Canarsie's rejection of liberalism and integration is the subject of Jonathan Rieder's insightful and disturbing ethnography. Fundamentally a study of perceptions and beliefs, Rieder's book examines how the Canarsians see their world, and in particular of how their experiences have shaped their political views. Overwhelmingly the children of Jewish and Italian immigrants, Canarsians are for the most part small tradespeople, skilled blue collar and lower level white collar workers elevated to marginally middle class status by post war prosperity and the labor movement. In short they are precisely the sort of folks that once formed the backbone of the "New Deal Coalition." Yet Rieder reports that by the time of his research (the mid 1970s) Canarsians no longer associated liberalism with the economic vision of the New Deal (which many of them continued to share), but rather with weakness, profligacy, fantasy, irresponsibility and elitism. Conservatism, by contrast, had become associated with toughness, realism, maturity and simple self protection.

How did this happen? In exploring this question Rieder, a Yale sociologist and self described liberal, has uncovered the deep insecurity, fear and ambivalence that lies beneath Canarsie's backlash bluster. He makes no secret of his repugnance at the racism evident in much of what his informants say and do. Yet, rather than simply dismiss Canarsie as but another example of the notorious mean spirited conservatism of the house proud petit bourgeoisie, Rieder takes seriously his informants reasons for what they do. He presents their underlying urge to protect their community as understandable and even quite sensible.

Canarsians, Rieder reports, see themselves as the victims: the pawns of liberal social planners, whose own kids, they strongly suspect, are in private schools. Locked out of the suburbs by the rising real estate costs of the 1970s, Canarsians were all too aware that their houses, which represented tremendous achievement and sacrifice for these children of the working class, could quickly become worthless in another round of "block busting" by real estate speculators. Many, particularly the members of the neighborhood's Jewish majority, grew up in adjacent Brownsville, East New York and East Flatbush, all now predominantly black. They see themselves as having been driven from these communities by rising crime, racial change and disinvestment. Unlike liberals in the upper middle class suburbs or the "safe" neighborhoods of Manhattan, they cannot avoid the terrors of street crime and social collapse in these

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ghettos, for they still must cross them daily to get to the rest of the city. What is more, their fears of the black poor are compounded by a deep sense of loss. Those same ghettos were once home. Any urbanite will appreciate the poignance of one of Rieder's informants driving his children through the decaying slums to see the site of "his" candy store. In Canarsie, with their backs literally against the ocean (Rieder's informants often make comparisons to Israel) they stopped running, and for a while things got ugly. Sadly (if predictably),Canarsians struck out at those even more powerless than themselves: little black school children and middle class black home buyers.

In writing a work of sociology that is both about a specific community and a broader social trend, Rieder faces the problem of representativeness that is common to all ethnographers. From the 1930's to the 1960's American sociology's preoccupation with deriving generalizable principles led to a number of now famous pseudonymous community studies, from "Middle Town" to "Yankee City." As valuable as some of these works were, they tended to emphasize what the authors considered generalizable "findings," at the expense of anything thought to be to specific to the place in question (that being considered more appropriate terrain for journalists or historians). New York City's unique prominence in American culture made it difficult to render generic, which may be one reason that American "urban sociology" has had remarkably little say about America's premier city. Rieder, on the other hand is willing to report the activities of real people in real places in great detail. He is certainly interested in general changes in American life and his work has significance far beyond its geographically defined subject matter. Yet he never sacrifices what is specific about Canarsie. In the end it is what is unusual about Canarsie that makes the book fascinating, and that reveals the most valuable lessons about white ethnic conservatism.

By the mid 1970's, many Canarsians were proudly proclaiming themselves members of "Middle America," with all of the knee jerk patriotism that the phrase implies. Yet to understand Canarsie one must bear in mind what unlikely "Middle Americans" its people were. Many of Canarsie's Jews (whose journey across the political spectrum was more profound and ambivalent than that of the substantial Italian minority) have deep roots on the left. Their families are often steeped in the social democratic traditions of the labor movement. Although few were attracted to the immigrant radicalism common in their parents generation, they were certainly exposed to many strains of Socialism, Communism and Labor Zionism while growing in a world where the main body of political opinion was firmly rooted in the left wing of the Democratic Party. These are people who helped to give American "liberalism," the social democratic flavor it acquired in the 1930's. Further, it was not embourgeoisment that drew them to conservatism. Canarsie's Jews continued to vote liberal and Democratic long after most had risen to middle class status and home ownership. However, by the 1970's the perception of threat did what mere prosperity had not done: it turned many Jews towards reactionary "back lash" politics. This protectionist reaction found its role model in the "toughness" of their more conservative Italian neighbors.

The contrast between these Jews and the Italians is a central theme in Rieder's work. Italians dominated the population of Canarsie until the 1950's, yet by the time of Rieder's research they were a numerical minority and the commitment of many Italians to Brooklyn's largely irrelevant Republican party kept them politically marginal. Nevertheless, the family centered, anti-government, "tough" conservatism of the Italians provided a model that contrasted to the concessionary "weakness" of liberalism. This image of tough conservatism — usually expressed in the macho vernacular that has become frighteningly commonplace in the Reagan era — was most

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resonant on the issue of street crime. It should be noted that it was not the violation of the law per se that upset people in Canarsie; Brownsville Jews and Brooklyn's working class Italians have never been unduly squeamish about that; but the random irrational street violence that rendered public and even private space unsafe. Liberals, Canarsians felt, had become obsessed with civil liberties. Yet without physical safety, the whole notion of liberty had become meaningless. This is an important lesson that the American left has had great difficulty in learning, and tremendous damage was done to the left when poor and working class people, the primary victims of street crime, began to see the left and left liberals as the defenders of criminals. Confronted with what they saw as a breakdown of civic order, Canarsians, Jews and Italians alike, set aside visions of how to make a better world and took to the mean and narrow business of self protection.

For some Canarsians the coming of the blacks was also a kind of mental short hand for the larger breakdown of their world. "Blacks" Rieder notes paraphrasing Lévi-Strauss, "were good to think with as well as to hate with." They came to symbolize a host of social dislocations including things that they had little or nothing to do with, such as changes in sexual morality, the decline in parental authority and the feelings of cultural loss experienced by second generation immigrants. Yet, Rieder cautions us not be too quick to dismiss the "agitation of cultural traditionalists" as the "last spasm of an atavistic remnant," or merely a nostalgic consolation for the world that has been lost. No matter how irrational racism and machismo were as a response to cultural loss, the value of community, order and safety are not themselves to be scoffed at. "Unless one clings to an unyieldingly materialistic view of human needs," he writes, "fighting back in defense of those values seems a reasonable thing to do" (p. 134).

Canarsians also show some sophistication in their choice of villains. They were quick to differentiate between middle or "honest" working class blacks and those they call "garbage," "animals" and worse. Yet, here the circular reasoning of racism traps them. While they insist that they do not object to blacks per se, they believe as a matter of faith that an influx of middle class blacks into the neighborhood will inevitably be followed by panic selling by whites and block busting by real estate speculators. This will in turn lead to disinvestment, an influx of the underclass, a rise in crime and the destruction of the area. They themselves admit being unable to know who the "good element" among the blacks are. "The problem is that we see all blacks as a mass. It is unfortunate. We can't tell a black pimp from a black mailman" (p. 85) reports a Jewish carpenter. Thus, all blacks, the worthy and the unworthy, must be kept out, and in Canarsie they shed few tears for the middle class blacks who are undoubtedly the primary victims in this scenario.

Rieder reports this as the perception of Canarsians, and given the history of neighboring Brownsville it is easy to see why they believe it. On the subject of the ghetto Rieder seems to have absorbed the nightmares of his informants. His description of contemporary Brownsville is more than a bit melodramatic (he reports hearing lurid stories about a local cannibal from the police, apparently without having left the safety of the patrol car), but not completely off base. Brownsville *has* become an urban nightmare and its transition from the shabby but vibrant working class district of Alfred Kazin's memoir to the wasteland it is today is an American tragedy that has yet to be fully explained. The fact is, however, that this did not turn out to be universally the case. Panic selling and neighborhood racial change did produce some horrible slums, but it also opened unusual opportunities for hard pressed working class blacks to establish viable, if struggling neighborhoods in areas not far from Canarsie. As

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many readers will presumably be unaware of the existence of these neighborhoods, which belie some of the Canarsians' fears, it would have been appropriate to point them out. While Rieder takes no notice of Brooklyn's stable black and integrated neighborhoods he does report in an epilogue based on a brief return to Canarsie that by 1980 a few blacks had managed to move in with none of the tragic effects his informants had predicted. Yet, in general, he has little to say about blacks. We never really find out how they feel about being the targets of white ethnic discontent or what they hope to gain from having children in Canarsie schools. Rieder clearly feels for the terrified black students facing the jeering mob, yet rather than explore the issue he simply includes a Wilfred Cartey poem inspired by the incident. For all of his sympathy, the blacks remain as impenetrable for Rieder as for his informants.

Perhaps this is something of an unfair criticism. The Jews and Italians are Rieder's subject: he seeks to understand how they see the world and to smash a few academic myths about lower middle class know-nothingism along the way. Yet, Rieder's subjective focus can be frustrating, for it leads him to pass rather lightly over what are some of the more interesting details of how urban conflicts get played out. For one thing, having brilliantly documented the cultural roots of the backlash, Rieder pays far less attention to the institutional forces that contained and ultimately diffused it.

During the midst of various local crises, Canarsie's anti busing activists and even its occasional vigilantes were able to act with confidence that their goals, if not their methods, were widely approved of by the community. Yet, their influence was largely ephemeral. Their forays into electoral politics were remarkably unsuccessful and they exerted little influence on long term policy: boycotts did not keep blacks out of the schools; threats and bombings could not keep people from selling homes to blacks willing to pay top dollar for them (alas, the free market does occasionally have its blessings). On the national level Canarsie voters did support Ronald Reagan in 1980 (they returned to the Democrats by a narrow margin in 1984, after this work was already in press) and Rieder is probably correct in asserting that the national Democratic Party can no longer count on this kind of ethnic lower middle class constituency. However, this makes all the more interesting the failure of the backlash activists to break the hold of a surprisingly liberal Democratic political machine at the local level.

The back lash forces were able to capture the local Republican Party, probably because, as in many American cities, Brooklyn's Republican Party does not count for very much. Canarsie was, and is ruled by a local Democratic "club" which Rieder describes as "a model of machine politics." This powerful patronage-based operation had, by the mid-1970s, become an important force in city and state politics with a political agenda that stretched far beyond the concerns of the neighborhood. Whether due to the personal commitments of its leaders or to the needs dictated by this agenda, the club often took stands considerably more liberal than those favored by most Canarsians, a fact that may come as a shock to some liberal intellectuals. More importantly, the machine had a vital interest in the maintenance of business as usual, without the disruptive influence of ideologues of the left or of the right. Being ideologically out of step with its constituency, the machine did what it does best: it took the ideology out of politics. Its functionaries served as mediators during tense periods, listening to the Canarsians concerns and generally "cooling out" discontent (at the same time their allies in black neighborhoods were busily coopting the style while diffusing the substance of black protest). When election time came the machine mobilized its considerable resources and, running moderate campaigns emphasizing service delivery, was able to

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totally outflank its shrill, race baiting opponents. Political ideologies exist within structures of constraint and opportunity, and the role of the machine in containing right wing protest provides a fascinating example of the interplay between protest ideologies and political structures. Unfortunately this is somewhat obscured by Rieder's emphasis on culture.

In the long run, however, Rieder is almost certainly correct in concluding that conservatism, if not necessarily virulent racism, is now the dominant political trend in urban "Middle America," and perhaps even in Jewish "Middle America." The people of Canarsie, driven, as they see it, out of the "New Deal Coalition," are unlikely to return soon. The task of bridging the gap between blacks and lower middle and working class whites certainly seems to be more than present Democratic Party is capable of. The very real divergence of black and white interests may have made this gap inevitable. Yet, as Rieder notes, liberals contributed mightily to their own demise. They indulged in simple-minded stereotypes about "Archie Bunkers" and "hard hats" and poohpoohed the legitimate concerns of frightened people while seeming to cater to the needs of every other conceivable interest group. What would it take to bring the left-liberal coalition back together? Rieder seems to be hoping for a leadership that could take the needs and fears of these people seriously without pandering to the worst of their insecurities with posturing machismo and thinly veiled racism. Unfortunately, the emergence of such a leadership from the ranks of the increasingly "neo-liberal" Democratic Party remains highly unlikely.

Philip Kasinitz

Juan E. Corradi, *The Fitful Republic: Economy, Society, and Politics in Argentina*. Westview Press, (Boulder and London 1985). Latin American Perspectives Series, Number 2, 175 pages selected bibliography and index.

Corradi's book is a detailed account of modernization in Argentina. There has been considerable urbanization and industrialization. There is a highly organized work force and a large educated middle class. Yet, Argentina is not all that different from other Latin American countries, and remains a peripheral capitalist society characterized by "dependency, stagnation, political decay and violence" (p. 2). Although Corradi does not indulge in theoretical debates, his insistence on the analysis of the conscious subjects who have made Argentinian history challanges all linear theories of development, including Wallerstein's world system perspective since it assumes a mechanical hierarchy of economic growth in different regions of the world. According to Corradi, the main problem is not economic but political. Argentina has had to confront "the same evils that have beset sister nations" in Latin America. But the failure to overcome economic dependency can only be explained in terms of the "complicated social machinery" in civil society. Argentinians have not been able to cope with economic crises. Thus, democratic and legal institutions have been set aside while order has been achieved through violent dictatorships which, however, fail to dominate civil society. In this process, economic and social development has not been accompanied by new institutions and new forms of integration.

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According to dependency theory, the appropriation of the surplus value of "dependent societies" by the developed world because of unequal exchange relation, makes modernization impossible in the third world. Hence, such societies will have to withdraw from the capitalist division of labor. Corradi, however, claims that the failures of Argentinian development cannot be understood in terms of inadequate capital accumulation, but in terms of its wrong use. Before the Great Depression an "aristocracy of cattle barons" had built an export agro-pecuarian economy. Urban society was subordinated to it, even though the constitutional regime allowed the middle class composed of outsiders to achieve electoral success through the *Union Civica Radical.* But this social order was threatened in the 1930s as agricultural exports and prices declined while imported manufactured goods remained expensive. The landed aristocracy seized the state in 1930, imposed economic controls and "allowed" a limited growth of light industries to reduce imports and balance trade. Since it was *their* industrialization, they increased the price of agricultural produce within Argentina while financing industrial growth through low wages. This weakened the market for the goods being produced and directed much of the surplus in the urban economy to the agrarian elite.

But if industrial growth remained limited, there was considerable social development. Even though the *estancieros* lived in cities almost all of non-agricultural activity remained in the hands of immigrants. Thus, Corradi argues that the industrial middle class were not a "national bourgeoisie" (p. 50) and although they developed a strong identity and pursued their interests, they formulated no new ideology or program. As a result, no party of industry emerged and no new institutions were established. On the other hand, a massive *national* proletariat developed because immigration was stopped and the urban workforce became full of rural elements who left the countryside because of high unemployment. Their organizations grew strong through competition between the communists, the socialists and the syndicalists.

These popular classes in alliance with the new industrial bourgeoisie, the church and the military provided the support for the nationalist state of Juan Peron (1946-1955). They were opposed by the entire Argentinian establishment and the middle class *radicales.* This new regime launched the first Latin American experiment in "non-aligned developmentalism in a mixed economy." But, again, investments were not directed towards radical industrial change and the development of national resources.

Peron began by using the state mechanisms established by the conservative regimes to "transfer economic surplus from the primary export sector to the industrial sector" (p. 63). A state marketing agency took control of exports and fixed prices at home. Consequently, the difference between prices overseas and at home in meat and grain, etc., created credit in the State Bank which was used to finance the national industry. Moreover he created a state pension system that generated a massive fund on the basis of 25% of wages. To state monopoly control over external trade and the pension funds, the regime added the nationalization of the central bank thus controlling most reserves from private banking. Peron also nationalized railways, telephone and gas companies, urban transport and insurance. Consequently the state had a higher capacity to direct economic development than ever before.

But the development of a new investment strategy was frustrated. The foreign earnings generated by Peron's trade policies were invested in existing industries. Thus, while imports of consumer goods were further reduced and light industries expanded, imports of raw materials and capital goods for industry and transport required export earnings. But Peron's agricultural policy acted as a disincentive to productivity. He did

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not make foreign credit available to purchase new machinery while international prices for agricultural commodities dropped. This problem in foreign exchange also shows how the landed oligarchy were as economically important as ever before even though relatively weakened as a social force.

Moreover, the regime spent considerable money on programs which greatly improved the workers' conditions. But this largesse was funded by capital accumulated during the period of prosperity. A self-imposed austerity was required when the post-war boom ended. Hence, Peron was politically blocked by his own supporters in his attempt to eliminate income redistribution in a consumer-based industrialization. Welfare state policies merely strengthened a labor force which was independently organized and was an obstacle to his radical capitalist development.

The innovative role in industrial investment was played by foreign monopoly capital. When Peron could no longer generate savings without sacrificing his own base or further exploiting agriculture, he allowed North American and European investors to invest in the major sectors of existing industry and establish capital intensive automobile plants and chemical complexes. When Peron was ousted and the political hegemony of the landed bourgeoise reestablished in 1955 they reversed Peron's agricultural policy to stimulate production and increase their exports. They also continued the denationalization of industry.

The problem with economic dependence was not the exportation of the Argentinian surplus, but its accumulation by an agricultural elite and its dissipation by every sector of society. While this increased demand for locally produced consumer goods, it did not open up new areas of investment by the state or by the industrial bourgeoisie. When Peron was ousted in 1955 there was full employment and not the mass marginalization and underdevelopment postulated by dependency theory. Moreover, while the industrial bourgeoisie was weak it was far from inactive. The state, on the other hand, was not controlled by either a ruling class or restricted by an imperial power but reflected Argentinian civil society. Corradi does not discuss it, but it should be pointed out that this autonomous administrative state was constructed by the social democratic and populist forces as well as by the conservative-military regimes and the fascists. The bourgeois industrial and financial interests played a supportive role and they benefitted from the ensuing policies, while the catholic church seems to have supported all sides at different times, thus contributing to the social stalemate.

The 1966 military coup initiated a new era. Till then Argentina was relatively autonomous in the international arena. The subsequent industrialization directed by monopoly capital has had enormous political consequences. The 1966-1970 dictatorship was supported by foreign capital interests clustered around North American subsidiaries. For Corradi this represented "the final satellization of Argentine capitalism. Argentina was supposed to become an industrial dependency in which stabilization is obtained at the expense of capital in the hands of foreign entrepreneurs and their local associates" (p. 90). Their plan for dependent industrialization involved the rationalization of the existing productive apparatus and a forced reduction in wages combined with the streamlining of the public sector efficiency to reduce inflation. They broke the alliance of labor and the state. Moreover, the regimes exchange policy involved the devaluation of the peso so that multinationals could buy cheaply into the economy and exports would be encouraged thereby generating a balance of payments and reserves in the central bank. But this devaluation was also seen as putting money into hands of agrarian exporters so a land tax was instituted. Furthermore, they sought to break the economic basis of small and medium sized firms by manipulating the

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funds of the commercial petit bourgeoisie. Thus, they hoped that foreign capital would rush in and buy up everything available, create new employment and other bureaucratic jobs to replace those they cut.

The regime also precipitated a change in middle class politics. During the period of "restricted pluralism" (1955-66) which disenfranchised the working class, university education was completely modernized. Since the middle class supported the conservative regime, university students were free to choose among new cultural trends. They faced "a wider set of choices but also a more uncertain future" than their forebears. At the same time, there was a "disarticulation of political language" (p. 104) at the very heights of power. Official discourse could no longer deploy old formulas. But since no social class could "gain ideological hegemony over the entire society" (p. 105) no synthesis emerged. "Political discourse in Argentina moved toward a dangerous freedom from all consonance, from the obligation to resolve the dissonance" (p. 105).

Since every possible combination of ideas was permissible, the legitimacy of the social order depended more and more on the ability to "deliver the goods." But after 1955, economic crisis and the IMF imposed austerity made it impossible for the new generation to pursue self-realization. Following 1966, the destruction of political institutions and the brutal repression of the universities was added to even greater economic constraints. Without traditional responses to their situation (unlike the army that could fall back on violence) middle class youth resisted all proposals and generated their own radical designs. Political discourse broke down so that the language of mythical essences and counter-violence prevailed. At the same time, the traditional opposition between the middle class and workers was set aside in the Peronist Youth Movement and in left wing ideologies.

Thus, while monopoly capital could destroy the old equilibrium and the political stalemate of the existing social classes, it could not promote a new kind of integration. In 1969 opposition was generalized and the regime collapsed. But if within civil society there was the ability to resist the "*entreguista*" state completely subordinated to foreign interests, these same social classes were unable to form a national regime and an alternative economic strategy between 1970 and 1976.

In 1970, the military regime envisaged an eventual redemocratization of Argentina. But this idea lost the support of the regimes major ally, the large business community, so that the regime found itself unable to pay off the other sectors of society. In 1971, General Lanusse took over and opted for a negotiated political retreat on the part of the army rather than more repression. But his "Great National Agreement" was resisted by the Peronist working class, and the new revolutionary Montoneros began their ideological and guerilla campaigns. With the military and economic elites in full retreat, all hopes were then focused on the Peronist candidate, Dr. Cámpora who won the 1972 elections. But his policy of "national reconstruction" did not satisfy the radicals. Since he allowed them to take office in his government they were able to mobilize the masses. In 1973 Dr. Cámpora resigned following a coup by right wing Peronists and Peron himself returned from exile to win a national election.

He immediately sought to repress all leftists while proposing social and economic reforms and a renegotiation of foreign dependency. But his nationalist and anti-imperialist rhetoric of 1946 faced a different Argentina in 1973. While he worked with the *radicales*, the unions and entrepreneurs (supported by the Peronist Youth) to formulate an incomes policy, the Montoneros intensified their activities. The previously suppressed unions and political parties now sought to retrieve their lost social power. The "integrated democracy" that could bring down the military and the foreign

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regime could not rebuild institutions and maintain unity except in Peron's illusory charismatic centralized authority. When Peron died in 1974 Argentina was split into warring camps of left and right while the clever leaderships in corporatist institutions were more interested in positioning themselves for survival in the face of the inevitable return of the military than in any program of democratic integration through compromise and restraint.

It is this condition of civil society that Corradi defines as the basic problem of Argnetinian modernization. There is neither a ruling class nor a viable coalition within civil society that can direct national development. The landed elite remains an important force but, like the industrial bourgeoisie, it is not a ruling class. The middle class which comprises some 40 per cent of the population has not been a force for stability and is ideologically very divided. Along with military interests and the working class these sectors are all highly organized and engaged in pursuing their particular economic interests. Corporatist groups "bypass the official political process and enter into deals outside and around representative institutions" (p. 152) with disastrous consequences for democratic government. On the other hand, this social disintegration is manifest in the disorder that characterized every moment of crisis and has resulted in the use of violent means to achieve a new state-imposed order, which in turn does not function and fails to control civil society. It is this institutional and social disintegration as well as the directionless character of modern Argentinian dependency that is captured in the psychological metaphor of the title of this book, *The Fitful Republic.* Dependency means that Argentina has "not achieved the political sophistication and self-restraint that could make participation and freedom compatible. It has repeatedly denied itself what it has needed most, a properly functioning bourgeois democratic system" (p. 126). The problem of the state, whether in its dictatorial or democratic form, its inability to formulate and execute consistent policies, was a function of that civil society. Imperialism in the 20th century did not determine the course of Argentinian history. Indeed, the first attempt at direct intervention in 1966, i.e., the first attempt at the formation of what dependency theory calls an "*entreguista*" state, was a complete failure.

The 1976 military coup saw the emergence of a completely new form of dependency and state intervention. Given the disarticulation of Argentinian society, foreign capital interests used the army to seize the state apparatus. A new language was used to describe civil society as "seriously ill" (p. 117) and in need of surgery. The regime's monetarist strategy tried to transform the economic structure without increasing bureaucratic controls over the economy as a whole while attempting to denationalize it. Thus, the state withdrew from all organized pressures within Argentinian society, unlike the interventionist state that managed compromises and mobilized the different sectors. Social regulation was abandoned for market regulation. To establish sound economic behavior it was assumed that all authority had to be denied in the market place. Old economic ties and loyalties had to be broken up. Most importantly, this free market abolished the necessity of negotiating with their principal antagonist, labor, but also with the national capitalists. Thus, Corradi argues, liberal economic policies and free enterprise were a mere ideological guise — a piece of political strategy through which the regime hoped to destroy pre-existing patterns of behavior and political alliances.

This free market utopia was combined with the most extensive repression in Argentinian history. In an effort to establish absolute control over social change, a new form of state came into existence. All social conflict, open negotiation and debate was rejected. Ideology was militarized with every national subject, person or group defined as

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friend or foe in a national situation seen as a war zone. The state became a quasi-private and violent affair of national security. The remnant of a constitution was joined to the arbitrary action of armed bands and public life returned to a primordial state in a pseudo-conservative regime.

But the whole apparatus of state intervention could not be eliminated. Unlike the Chilean experiment, the military feared that subversion fueled by the Montoneros would result from massive unemployment. So the military did not allow the minister for economic affairs to cut their budget or sell national industries closely associated with their needs. Consequently, high taxes were the only solution to the problem of the government budget.

On the other hand, they hoped to reduce inflation by devalueing the peso at a rate below the inflation rate. Since this policy was associated with a reduction in import tariffs, internal prices would have to face international competition. In theory the two prices should have converged. But this policy also failed since it depended on reducing the budget. Consequently, the peso was devalued 87% between 1978 and 1980 but wholesale prices rose 212% and retail prices 256%.

Bankruptcies and deindustrialization followed. Imports increased while wealth left the country. This drain on national capital was all the more problematic since there was a slowdown in exports due to the world recession. More and more borrowing only increased the external debt from 19 billion to 45 billion in 1983. The economy continued to stagnate, wages were low and inflation high. Even multinational corporations were negatively affected while and international bakers were the only beneficiaries.

Thus, the economic and political experiments in monopoly capitalist industrialization (whether in the form of an interventionist state or the free market repressive state) also failed. They merely added to the destruction of institutional life without constructing any new basis for a social order. Moreover, while the resistance of civil society in 1969 brought down the first regime, the military state merely collapsed following the Malvinas-Falkland fiasco. Democracy came through a process of exhaustion. Thus, Corradi, points out that the landslide election of President Alfonsin in 1983 "represented the opportunity to enforce and guarantee a truly democratic covenant based on the conviction that accountable statesmen must prevail over soldiers and technicians at the helm" (p. 151).

The Fitful Republic was written before Corradi could observe the new democracy in action. But his focus on civil society makes this book very important in the assessment of its problems. The present predicament involves tackling an economic crisis of stagflation and a massive external debt while at the same time reconstructing Argentinian society with a democratic state.

Alfonsin made democratization and social reconstruction a first priority and the rule of law has triumphed over state violence now that the military commanders have been convicted for waging a "dirty war" against their own people. However, by 1984 the consumer price index rose 688%. The official exchange rate dropped from 26.3 pesos to the dollar in January 1984 to 322 in March 1985 with dramatic consequences for the 50 billion dollar debt. Traditionally, this kind of economic crisis has resulted in social tensions and the breakdown of democratic governments. This is especially likely given IMF insistance on controlling inflation and repaying all installments of the debt through free markets without state controls or subsidies, with tight money and an austerity budget, as well as a program which works against most social classes in Argentina. Indeed, this gradual approach has never worked anywhere and occasionally has pro-

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voked severe recessions. Debt refinancing merely means greater debt at high international interest rates. If in the Third World prices are increased to meet costs, contracts are indexed by business and labor to guarantee them against expected inflation and the government prints money to meet increasing deficits.

While resisting this obsolete IMF strategy, Alfonsin fired his Minister for Economics in early 1985 and replaced him with a small team of American educated technocrats under the leadership of Juan Sourrouille. In consultation with Peronist economists, key officials of the U.S. Federal Reserve Board and the IMF, they implemented what is known as the "Austral Plan" in June 1985. This program was designed to stop the economy in its tracks and keep it still until the public stopped expecting more inflation. To counteract the hyperinflation in early 1985 they fixed wages and prices, created a new currency, set about balancing the budget, raising tariffs to cover costs that could not be cut, stopped printing money while slashing interest rates to stimulate the economy. Meanwhile, the IMF offered a "standby fund" in case foreign payments could not be met.

Within the U.S., however, there seems to be a dispute between the IMF which continues to require austerity and the "Baker Plan" of October 1985. The American Treasury Secretary seeks to reactivate the economies of debtor nations while criticizing the fact that the IMF recipe merely channels all resources into interest payments. In recent years, for example, in Argentina there has been no capital to finance development. Indeed, the economy has stagnated for 36 years and in the last 15 years there has been negative growth. Baker, therefore, advocates that the World Bank guarantee private lenders to finance an expansion in Argentina. The plan, which has the support of the Reagan administrations insists on tax reform, market determined pricing and a reduction in labor market rigidities (i.e., cheaper labor) to spur exports that can compete in the U.S. with other third world commodity producers.

This focus on growth rather than inflation seems much more likely to help resolve the problem of foreign debt and social democracy in Argentina. As Corradi points out, till now, "crisis management and civilized political compromise work at cross purposes" (p. 152). Austerity has been no solution. Political repression has merely resulted in a generalized institutional deterioration and failed to contain the absolutization of instrumental reason on the part of individuals and their corporatist collective organizations. Abdication of the debt would be disastrous for Argentina as well as for the U.S. Their only hope is to develop an investment policy that works directly on the resources within Argentina while at the same time integrating production within the international division of labor. So far Alfonsin does not seem to have developed any such plan that would channel domestic foreign and newly borrowed capital in a "rational development" (p. 3).

Already business in Argentina is complaining about the price controls that act as a disincentive to investment when costs of international commodities continue to rise. They want tax incentives instead of increases, reduced interest rates, wages kept to a minimum and the privatisation of state enterprises rather than the promotion of new investment opportunities. Labor, on the other hand, is fairly helpless. It is this fragmentation of civil society that Alfonsin must resolve if Argentina is to overcome the present crisis and, eventually, its dependent status.

Patrick M. Hughes

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Jon Jósef Lipski, *Komitet Obrony Robotników* (Aneks: London, 1983)*

Lipski's book on KOR can be read from one main perspective: how does opposition come about? This does not refer to opposition in general, but to opposition within totalitarian or nearly totalitarian conditions. Such conditions are interesting because they rule out social action by autonomous self-motivated subjects.

Lipski answers the question directly in the chapter on "The Prehistory of KOR." Birth is preceeded by a long process of formation of intellectuals' circles and the strengthening of social, occupational, and experiencial links, e.g., the role of post-AK circles.[1] In the footnotes one learns all about the "Neo-Pickwickists Club"[2] founded after the war by Lipski and Manturzewski. Elsewhere in the text Lipski emphasizes "friendship." In a nutshell, the prehistory of the opposition is something intimate, private, and short of "critical" events. So it seems that oppositional ideas arise rather normally and idiosyncratically. This prehistory is nothing more than the biographies of particular people, their individual choices at a certain time and place when they expressed their opposition and their willingness to defend the right to be "in the opposition." Taking a stand against something is crucial because the opposition was the result of individual acts of rebellion. If rebellions do not find their ideological, oftentimes symbolic, identity, they are condemned to extermination. Furthermore, if rebellion does not find or create its own community of opposition, it is also condemned to extermination. Notions of opposition are far more common than their actual realizations. Since those first decisions are individual in character, the System tries to isolate them all the more. This becomes even stronger when opposition, as a social entity, has already began to act, when it has began to solidify. At that time individual rebellion can find both a human as well as an intellectual community. And here is the significance of the founding of KOR — the concretization of simple acts of opposition. These were simple acts, but also attempts to act through groups, e.g., through letters of intellectuals and writers, and the activity of the Clubs of Catholic Intellectuals.[3]

There had been, however, earlier attempts to consolidate oppositional activity. One need only recall the October[4] Club of the Crooked Circle[5], the pre-March Club of the

*Originally published in *Naprzod*, n. 1 (1985). English translation by Michael Bernard.

1. AK, or *Arma Kajania* (Home Army) was a politically broad-based resistence movement during WWII. It included the Polish Socialist Party (PPS) as well as the full political spectrum including conservatives. It organized fighting units, intelligence, espionage, schools, courts and even government ministries in occupied Poland. For additional information, see Stefan Korbonski, *The Polish Underground State.*

2. This was a bohemian and epicurean circle started in early 1960s. It was named after Dickens' *The Pickwick Papers.*

3. The Clubs of Catholic Intellectuals (KIK) informally arose soon after Stalin's death. They were founded by Catholic intellectuals disgusted with the regime. These circles were legally recognized as KIK after the Polish October of 1956.

4. In Poland, major acts of political resistence are often referred by the month in which they occurred, i.e., "October" — de-stalinization in 1956; "March" — students' protest in 1968; "December" — strike wave on the Baltic coast in 1970; "June" — strike wave in 1976; and "August" — 1980.

5. This was a democratic and revisionist discussion club which was eventually banned after Gamulka consolidated his power.

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Seekers of Contraditions,[6] and politically Boy Scout groups,[7] or the more important secret "MOVEMENT" during the last phase of Gomulka's rule.[8] Why then was KOR successful where others ended in disaster? It is hard to provide a clear answer to this question. Lipski does a good job in documenting individual positions without exaggerating their qualities. But it is equally important to keep in mind the deeper cause for the success of the whole enterprise. The author does this when he writes about KOR as an "original" model of opposition (p. 8). Yet, however, a book which carefully details this model remains to be written. Lipski's *KOR* provides a good documentation and a chronicle of the events. But the question remains: what were the reasons for KOR's success? i.e., KOR's long and later "so fruitful" activity. The book does not answer this and the answer must be gleamed from the text.

This answer must be sought, above all, in what the seventy-year-old Lipski writes, i.e., that KOR's appeal was primarily ethical and moral rather than political (p. 42). This is correct, but the fact remains that the system of real socialism treats all attempts of this sort as political *sui generis*. The flexible ideology of KOR was anti-totalitarianism. People with various world-views (believers and non-believers), various party affiliations (communists, ex-party members, and people who had been against the joint party program)[9], and of different generations (older people who had acquired a taste for social activity before, during and after the war, as well as those whose only activist experience had been in March of 1968) came together on this basis.

Generally speaking, there are two types of anti-totalitarian positions — a) struggle against totalitarian authorities and institutions; and b) disposition towards an anti-totalitarian community for its own sake. Undoubtedly, KOR developed from this second type of position, while going beyond its structural limitations. From its very beginning, KOR's declaration of community was accompanied by a disposition towards the universalization of that community.[10] In 1976 KOR stood up for others, and in solidarity with these others. KOR did not confront the authorities, but from the very beginnings it crossed into an area which at that time the authorities jealously guarded. It was enough that KOR stood up at a time when in that sphere the authorities has become peculiarly unpopular.

What is important here is how accurate is the reversal of the popular way of talking about KOR as an institution, which somehow "brought about" the Polish August. This reversal consists in seeing KOR as a child of June of 1976. This is not merely an academic detail, but a matter that pertains to future activity. It involves the relationship between the activity of a few and the possibilities of society as an historically formed whole.

The June 1976 events were above all a rebellion. The authorities not only strangled this rebellion but, at least for a short time, manipulated it for their own benefit. At that

6. This club was formed by the students who attended the Klement Gottwald School, a lyceum for children of the new elite. Its membership list reads like a "Who's Who" of the Warsaw student leaders of 1968 and the younger generation of KOR activists and Solidarity advisers (e.g., Michnik, Blumstajn, Szlajfer, Litynski, Torunszyk, etc.).

7. For instance, Jacek Kuron was once Adam Michnik's scout leader in one such group.

8. Here a note of caution is necessary. The pre-history of the opposition in the Polish People's Republic has barely been outlined. On the whole, we only know of several threads, the post-Home Army Conspiracy, remnants of the Polish Peasant Party, the Polish Socialist Party and the revisionists. All are poorly documented.

9. These were socialists who were against cooperating too closely with communists in the immediate post-WWII period.

10. KOR was founded in the Fall of 1976 in response to the state's acts of repression against those who had gone on strike on June of that year.

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time, the system in Poland had learned a lot from past social outbreaks and it broke through a certain barrier which has not been previously crossed. The Gierek team survived unsuccessful increases in prices without incurring further damage. At that time, it broke through the price increase complex. However, workers must not have felt victory, but real pain (hidden price increases) and propagandistic defeat (they were promised nothing and nobody discussed it with them as in December 1970). Society in 1976 could have experienced what the participants in March events did. The March elite, to be sure, remained united. However, the March masses, those who participated in meetings and strikes, constituted a major percentage of those who reinforced party circles in the 1970s. As one of them said to me, "In March, I learned what power was and where it was." This is not just mass social opportunism. It was a sign that sovietization, particularly of the intelligentsia, is a permanent and ongoing process. In June, it seemed as if, after the sovietization of the intelligentsia, the rest of society would follow. Demonstrations of strength were not enough. That strength itself had to be reinforced (in mass meetings condemning hooligans and brawlers) and, like Hitler's strength, grew with each successive meeting.

June must be seen as a time when many mutually contradictory processes came to light. All the heroes of this drama showed their true colors. Above all, the world powers showed their complete indifference. Europe behaved in a similar way: East European rebellions are merely additional press items. None of the political entities of the "free world" showed any real interest in Poland's troubles. This is not only a question of a lack of initiative. The West simply did not have any alternatives for Poland in June. The lack of any independent political entities in Poland meant that the Western reaction was limited to supporting the Gierek team as a "more liberal" alternative within the party. Were Gierek and his people really such an alternative? They were, but this was completely independent of their "good" or "bad" intentions. The relative liberalism of "Gierekism" was a function of the program his team tried to implement and the socio-economic situation created in Poland and in the world during the second half of the seventies.

Gierek's program was based on an attempt to bring about a qualitative jump in production and consumption, and such a jump (Gierek's advisors, despite appearances, were not idiots) cannot be accomplished without social participation. They tried to rebuild this participation through economic rather than political mechanisms. Obviously, economism fits real socialism well. Nor does partial abandonment of political forms of motivation mean that the system has given up its ideological monopoly. As a result, certain interest groups came into being. The closer they were to the summit of power, the freer they were to act. In the seventies totalitarianism began to decompose from the top rather than from the bottom. The KOR people at least partially understood this. Already well after December 13, 1981, one of the heroes of the events recorded by Lipski reiterated that KOR wanted to educate the authorities and it still believed it was possible to educate them. What did society believe in? In this respect June was ambiguous. Through its only possible form of rebellion, society said to the authorities: "Rule us as you like, but in exchange you must guarantee our welfare." June was also the voice of an incapacitated society, which did not agree to its objectification.

KOR was born within these conditions and, in adapting to them, two dominant types of action arose: to provide assistance for repressed workers and to monitor the authorities' atrocities. Today the latter seems internally inconsistent (for many it also seemed so then). For example, KOR demanded that the *Sejm* (Parliament) set up a special commission to investigate the June repression, and thus to investigate its own crimes.

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Lipski writes: "KOR did not expect that the *Sejm* would empower such a commission, particularly not at that time." (p. 92) What is going on here? First, there is the matter of educating the authorities. Second, and what is more important, it entailed the possibility of the free formation of social interests (defense of the repressed) and it meant that a political demand was publically declared. This was evidence of KOR's existence as a subject. For the first time in the history of the Polish People's Republic, some sort of organism not only formulated a demand in its own interest, but in the name of all society. This meant crossing first of all the barriers to action that KOR eventually had to cross. In crossing that barrier, it was becoming an "opposition."

But did KOR really become an opposition? In a key chapter on "The Apolitical and Political Nature of KOR and KSS — "KOR.", Lipski does not provide a clear answer. He stresses that KOR was founded out of "moral indignation, and the need to provide assistance to the persecuted" in a situation where "the persecutor was the state" (p. 172). He reiterates: "KOR brought together people with antitotalitarian convictions." What they shared was a moral motivation, notwithstanding the fact that individually they held different political outlooks. Lipski traces the funding of KOR through the following steps: 1) moral motivation; 2) antitotalitarianism; and, finally, 3) a certain minimal political ground: a longing for a democratic and sovereign Poland.

That is how one of the leading members of the opposition sees it. Other questions remain. Was the constantly emphasized apolitical character of KOR only a matter of tactics (as stated in KOR's indictment)?[11] It was not just tactics. KOR as a whole, was an "apolitical" organization in the ordinary sense of the word. It did not formulate a political program, nor did it constitute itself as a political party. It did not formulate a program for the redistribution of authority in the Polish People's Republic, nor one for the overthrow of the system. Moreover, throughout its existence, KOR did not emphasize a political group or anyone's particular ideological or material interests. In light of international and national law KOR not only did not carry out any political activity, but it did not distribute any political texts. Of course, occasionally such texts were published by particular KOR members or collaborators. Even then, however, this had little to do with "politics" in the normal sense. Let the fragment of the book which Lipski cites as the most important internal political polemic within KOR stand as evidence.

Jacek Kuron precipitated it with an article in the third issue of *Information Bulletin* in 1979. There he expressed his fear that an uncontrolled social outburst would hurt Poland and that, in such a situation, the "democratic opposition" should formulate a program in the name of society to strengthen some "liberal" fraction in the Polish United Workers' Party (i.e., the communist party). According to Lipski, Kuron's article precipitated a "polarization within KSS — 'KOR'." In particular the *Glos* (The Voice) group led by Macierewicz began to actively develop independent parallel structures (p. 281). Lipski himself and Michalik sought to provide a mediation. They wrote then: "Should we try to create independent institutions not acknowledged by the authorities or struggle within official institutions for their renewal on society's behalf? The question recalls a classical problem: 'Should I wash my hands or my feet?' Yes, probably both."

This is not just an internal KOR issue, but also illustrates several essential and still relevant questions. There are apparantly three different viewpoints, each of which is a voice of "opposition." Who, however, is the political subject of this opposition? Is it

11. KOR members were arrested with the declaration of Martial Law in December 1981. Seven members were charged with making plans to overthrow the state and the social system in Poland. They were released in an amnesty in the Summer of 1984 before their trial was completed.

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tens, hundreds or thousands of activists and sympathizers? Yes, if one goes by the principle of explicit identification followed by the opposition. No, if one focuses on the fact that all these writings refer to the imprecise subject of society. But society is neither an opposition nor a political subject. It can be the subject of a revolution or of an uprising, but only that. August fully confirmed this. Similarly, society is not the subject of a movement for democracy, if by democracy one means a model of a conflictual social formation. In other words, democracy involves conflicting social groups seeking a legally negotiated general consensus. Since totalitarianism destroys the natural social structure, a new type of conflict arises between society and authority. During its whole existence, whether it wanted to or not, KOR articulated this very conflict. And here is the fundamental contradiction between the realization of sociopolitical measures before and after August.

Conflicts of this type do not easily lend themselves to political resolution. The dynamics of development is towards extreme solutions.[12] And it must be so even if the escalation is purely verbal. This dynamic eliminates authentic political divisions, since the figure of the enemy binds the community together. This is important, because it means that the great conflict, both before and after August, between KOR and various nationalist groups, were politically fictitious in two ways. First, both sides (this is a simplification since there were always more than two sides) sought similar political goals, as well as the same poorly defined measures after victory. Furthermore, neither KOR nor KPN[13] managed to generate a political program adequate for political subjects as vast as a society or a nation. A single program for such political subjects is only suitable for an uprising (if the enemy is foreign) or a revolution (if the enemy is some sort of expropriator). However, the 1982 events ended this seeming paradox. Both sides drew closer to each other in arguing for the possibility of a rebellion. This was outlined both in Kuron's article written while he was in prison, as well as in the program of "Niepodleglosc."[14]

The second cause of the fictitious nature of the quarrels within the opposition, both before and after August, is related to ideological readings of the situation. As already pointed out, in the fight with totalitarianism and statist ideologies there is no room for the traditional divisions of "Left" and "Right", clergy and laity, "Socialists" and "Nationalists" etc. The basis of opposition is a common anti-totalitarianism and resistance to ideological monopoly. None of the opposition journals, whether *Biuletyn Informacyjny*, *Glos*, or *Opinia* ever claimed that resistance in the "nationalist" or "socialist" tradition was senseless. Thus, Maciej Walter wrote that: "If today, without reference to our ideological sympathies, we set the ideas of struggle for the liberation of the nation and for the liberation of society against each other, we ground ourselves in stereotypes which work to the communists' advantage. They carefully foment this conflict, simultaneously blocking any chance to overcome it."[15] And in the next part of these considerations, entitled "How We Think about Tomorrow's Poland," he argues: the cause of this cleavage is the "mechanical carrying over of traditions, of trying to find a prepared prescription for Poland in the political thought of the two interwar decades, or

12. Jadwiga Staniszkis has elaborated this point immediately after the imposition of Martial Law. See her "Martial Law in Poland," in *Telos*, n. 54 (Winter 1982-1983), pp. 87-100.

13. KPN — the Confederation for an Independent Poland was a small group of nationalist intellectuals with cultural influence well beyond their small numbers. During the period of political polarization (October-December 1981) its number of sympathizers grew considerably.

14. Kuron's article has appeared in English in *The Nation* under the title "We Must Move to Resistence." "Neipodleglosc" ("Independence") is a post-martial law group of nationalists.

15. Cf. *Wola*, n. 4 and 5 (1984).

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even from the period of the partitions." But it is not just the poor realization of the tradition that causes this cleavage.[16]

Movements and political parties base their programs on the political aspirations of a nation, social classes, ethnic groups, or ideological groups. This differs from other political actions in the tendency toward assuming power or having actual input in the existing system of political relations, both from inside and outside. In order for this to come about independently of favorable conditions, a political movement must legitimate its will to power. It must develop a desire to make decisions and to take responsibility for political issues. KOR only developed the second. Throughout its existence, it developed a philosophy of power, but in a particularly negative way because it was the product of the experience of totalitarian authority. On the theoretical level, it spread the view that there was only one alternative in Poland: either totalitarianism by the will of the authorities or democracy with strong rights. Such an alternative excludes not only intermediate steps, but it even eliminates the possibility of developing intermediate political structures which subjectify group interests. August was such an intermediate solution.

Today we do not stand for empty ideological words. Distrust of political slogans has its source in an authentic process of believing in the "Good Utopia of Communism" — a process which was finished in the late 1940s in Poland. That experience with communism is a separate matter. In the West there are two kinds of political opposition. The first are pressure groups which mainly oppose something. They act in an individual or group fashion, either spontaneously or by conscious organization. The opposition community is characterized according to the nature of its resistance (e.g., anti-war, anti-abortion, in opposition to nuclear energy, etc.). In alternating his actions, (protest through open letters to authorities, picketing, hunger strikes) KOR crowned a long tradition of such opposition to authorities in the post-1944 period.

The second type is political opposition in the strict sense. This means that political parties which, for whatever reason, are not in power (i.e., minority parties in the Western democracies), oppose the party or parties in power. In this sense, the last Polish opposition was the Polish Peasant Party (PSL). KOR, KPN, and ROPCiO[17] were not this kind of political opposition. Western journalist sought to capture this phenomenon by using the term "dissidents" to describe them.

From the view point of the existence and functioning of the opposition, the present situation in Poland in comparison to the late 1970s is both better and worse. It is better because the KOR model of organized resistence to the monopoly of power has spread throughout society and has been effectively mastered by it. The Primate's Committee to Assist Prisoners, parish-level assistance committees, solidarity in the factories, a differentiated structure of resistence by creative circles, the independent press and the struggle of underground Solidarity are all part of a pattern rarely seen in the history of oppositional activity. And this must be taken into account in evaluating KOR, for they showed that this is possible and valuable. However, and this is the other side, since then there have not been new political programs and organizational alternatives. These manifold forms of "resistence" do not have an organizational summit. There are numerous forms of resistence creating a certain opposition movement, but they do not permit the creation of their own political center. What is worse is that they allow a model of political conspiracy to be imposed on them. Yet, between oppositional and conspiratorial activity there is an uncrossed abyss of forms, methods, means and ends.

16. Adam Michnik has written on the problems of this judgment in an article re-evaluating his relation to Roman Dmowski's position. See Krytyka, n. 15.

17. This is the Movement for Citizens' and Human Rights — another group dating back to the 1970s.

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Until it is possible to create a political center and climb out of the political basement, there will be no new social offensive in Poland. Here is where the KOR pattern of simultaneous and open action could be useful. It is an elastic pattern, permitting the creation of a community of those who overcome public fear and openly step out against the party's monopoly and those who also fruitfully act but not so openly. And so it goes . . .

Marcin Rewera

Stephen F. Cohen, *Rethinking the Soviet Experience. Politics and History since 1917* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985). 240 pp., $17.95.

Cohen is well known as the author of the 1973 biography, *Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution.* We learn more about Bukharin in the pivotal chapter of his new "revisionist" overview of sovietology, which illustrates how the man became a myth, and which serves also to justify Cohen's own analysis. The chapter is literally povital: it comes after two chapters which explain both the failures of American sovietology and the possibility of a better — if not more democratic — Soviet Union in the post-Stalin age characterized by a choice between reformism and conservatism. The scholarly "revisionism" Cohen champions is thus also political — although the political implications are found more directly in his recently published collection of columns from *The Nation* titled *Sovieticus: Soviet Realities and American Perceptions* (Norton, 1985).

Cohen's first chapter, "Sovietology as a Vocation," retraces the history of the discipline in order to show why its present crisis has made revisionism necessary. The roots of the crisis are intellectual. Sovietology neglects history on the one hand, society on the other. The sovietologist portrays a predestined and inevitable linear development. An inner logic of totalitarianism is supposed to explain why Leninism or "the" revolution had to give rise to Stalinism, which in turn necessarily followed the path of forced collectivization from 1929 to 1934, took a brief breather for two years before launching into the massive purges pf 1936-1939, then formed a temporary alliance with Hitler to gain the breathing space that permitted the victorious defense of the Fatherland. . . and so on. Such a schema, which Cohen inaccurately calls "whig," separates politics from society while neglecting historical options. As opposed to this, "Revisionist scholarship sees lost alternatives; a multiplicity of social, cultural, and political causes; unintended consequences; and makeshift measures." (p. 22) Revisionism came on the agenda when the détente showed that the differences between East and West were not so airtight, when splits within the Soviet bloc made the monolithic image of "totalitarianism" impossible to maintain, and when a vast amount of new empirical information (catalogued here in 57 pages of footnotes) could not be neatly shoe-horned into the old categories.

Cohen's second chapter, "Bolshevism and Stalinism" illustrates the inadequacies of the sovietological view of totalitarianism by pointing out that the "continuity thesis" makes it impossible to understand the specificity of Stalinism. Too many historical differences are brought together under abstract categories like "the" party, or modernization. Even Stalinism is said to mean different things at different moments, being

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radically revolutionary in the bloody collectivization in the early 30's and quite conservative after the War. The importance of this chapter's arguments can be seen in Cohen's refusal of the idea that Stalinism was the only way to preserve the revolution and to modernize Russia. History shows that there were other options. This is where Bukharin and the role of the New Economic Policy enter the picture.

Cohen is not an idolator of Bukharin. Although he speaks of him in the context of a "socialist humanism," and describes the manner in which reformers have returned to his ideas, he admits that Bukharin was a weak leader and certainly no democrat. This clears the way for the fourth chapter's discussion of "The Stalin Question Since Stalin" which tries to show that Stalin's power was not based merely on crude force exercised on an atomized population. Stalinism is treated by Cohen as "two towering and inseparable mountains" (94) of accomplishments and crimes. Krushchev's destalinization after 1956 threatened to go too far after the 22nd Party Congress in 1961. His replacement by Brezhnev after 1964 is discussed under the heading, "Stalin Rehabilitated." But Brezhnev did not simply return to something like the sovietologists' abstract category of "stalinism." Cohen treats Brezhnev as a "conservative," and Russian conservatism — like all others — needs "a usable past." To conserve the accomplishments of the Stalin era — along with a dose of nationalism, anti-semitism and anti-westernism — fills that function to this day. This, Cohen insists, explains the still active role of Stalinism.

In the final chapter Cohen argues briefly that change in Russia can come only from the top-down. This leaves only reformism and conservatism as viable political options. He insists that Russia is "one of the most conservative countries in the world." (146) But this does not rule out reform. Conservatism has three weaknesses, which will encourage and promote that reform. The first is the historical nightmare of Stalinism, which can become a reproach, as during the Krushchev years. Second, the "contract" by which the state buys the acquiescence of society in exchange for delivering a reliable supply of consumer goods is always in danger of being broken. Finally, Marxism-Leninism, which is still the common language in the country, also contains elements on which the reformers can learn.

Cohen's reformist optimism is hardly consoling; and his conclusion, that the West needs to chart its relations to Russia in order to encourage this tendency within society, does not sound too criticizing. The problem is built into Cohen's project. He titles his book *Rethinking the Soviet Experience*, but concentrates on other people's efforts to rethink it. His attacks on sovietology come especially in the first two chapters. After the pivotal chapter on Bukharin, it becomes clear that the "experience" of which Cohen speaks is that of Bukharin and his heirs. Cohen speaks the voice of Soviet reformers; his book asks us to understand them, while asking U.S. policy makers to take their side. This is not enough.

Because of the one-sided simplifications of sovietology's image of totalitarianism, Cohen seems to assume that the only possible platform from which to speak critically is that of the internal opposition. But why be bound by the either/or alternative? Cohen never asks in what sense 1917 was a revolution; he dismisses the question of modernization by reducing it to economic development. The result is that his analysis has to remain within the confines posed to the Russian reformers, who cannot put the events of 1917, but only their legacy, into question. He has at best reformulated the "crisis" of sovietology. The political implications are equally modest.

Dick Howard

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